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THE DUTCH FOUNDING OF NEW YORK

BY

THOMAS A. JANVIER

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"THE CHRISTMAS KALENDS OF PROVENCE" ETC.

ILLUSTRATED



NEW YORK AND LONDON
HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS

1903

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Published October, 1903.

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I

ARTFUL fiction being more convincing than artless fact, it is not likely that the highly untruthful impression of the Dutch colonists of Manhattan given by Washington Irving ever will be effaced. Very subtly mendacious is Irving's delightful *History of New York from the Beginning of the World to the End of the Dutch Dynasty*. Bearing in mind the time when he wrote — before Mr. Brodhead had performed the great work of

I

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collecting in Europe the documents relating to our colonial history, and while the records of the city and of the State still were in confusion—his general truth to the letter is surprising. But precisely because of his truth to the letter are his readers misled by his untruth to the spirit. Over the facts which he was at such pains to gather and to assemble, he has cast everywhere the glamour of a belittling farcical romance: with the result that his humorous conception of our ancestral Dutch colony peopled by a sleepy tobacco-loving and schnapps-loving race stands in the place of the real colony peopled by hard-headed and hard-hitting men.

Irving's fancy undoubtedly is kindlier than the plain truth. They were a rough lot, those Dutchmen who settled here in Manhattan nearly three hundred years

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ago; and they did not—the phrase is from our own frontier vocabulary—come here for their health. As has happened in the case of much later outpost settlements on this continent, they cheated the savages whom they found in residence, and most cruelly oppressed them. Also, on occasion, they cheated one another; out of which habit, as is shown by the verbose records of their little courts, arose much petty litigation of a snarling sort among themselves. In a larger and more impersonal fashion, they consistently cheated the revenue laws of the colony; and with a fine equanimity they broke any other laws which happened to get in their way—a line of conduct that is not to be condemned sweepingly, however, because most of the revenue laws of the colony, and many of its general laws, were unjust intrinsically and were administered in a

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manner that gave to those who evaded or who broke them a good deal in the way of colorable excuse. In a word, our Dutch ancestors who founded this city had the vices of their kind enlarged by the vices of their time. But, also, they had certain virtues—unmentioned by Irving—which in their time were, and in our time still are, respectable. With all their shortcomings, they were tough and they were sturdy and they were as plucky as men could be. Of the easy-going somnolent habit that Irving has fastened upon them as their dominant characteristic there is not to be found in the records the slightest trace. I am satisfied that that characteristic did not exist.

Certainly, there was no suggestion of somnolence in the promptness with which the Dutch followed up Hudson's practical discovery of the river that now bears his

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name. Hudson's immediate backers, to be sure, the members of the Dutch East India Company, took no action in the premises. They had sent him out to find a northerly passage to the Indies—and that he had not found. What he had found was of no use to them. The region drained by his great river was outside the limits of their charter; and trade with it did not promise—though promising much—returns at all comparable with those which were pouring in upon them from their spice-trade with the East. Therefore, his voyage having been a mere waste of their money, they charged off the cost of it to profit and loss and so closed the account—while the great navigator, being seized by his own government out of the Dutch service, went off to sea again: on that final quest of his for the impossible passage to the east by the

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north that ended in his death in Hudson's Bay.

But when Hudson's report of the fur-yielding country that he had found was made public in Holland certain other of the Dutch merchants pricked up their ears. These were the traders who carried European and Eastern goods to Russia and there bartered them for Muscovy furs: a commerce that had its beginning toward the end of the sixteenth century, and that was greatly stimulated by certain concessions granted by the Czar to the Dutch in the year 1604. Those concessions provided, in effect, that goods might be imported into Russia, and that goods to an equal value might be exported thence, on the payment of landing and loading duties of two and a half per cent., while on exports above the value of imports a farther duty of five per cent. was

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laid: a tariff system which, for those times, was at once so liberal and so simple that it drew to Archangel a fleet of from sixty to eighty Dutch ships a year.

But Hudson's exposition of the fur-trade possible in America made a still better showing. In dealing with ingenuous savages, unhampered by a government of any sort whatever, there would be no duties to pay on either imports or exports; and instead of being compelled to give value for value—a custom that all traders of all times have resented—a ship-load of furs could be had for the insignificant outlay of a few jerry-made hatchets and some odds and ends of beads. (It is but just to the Netherlanders to add that, in the passing of the centuries, they have lost nothing of their acuteness in such matters: as is evidenced by their ability to get and to keep the weather-gauge of

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the unlucky savages of the Congo Protectorate to-day.) And so, in the summer of 1610, certain merchants of Amsterdam—suffering no grass to grow under their feet—despatched to the island of Manhattan a vessel loaded with “a cargo of goods suitable for traffic with the Indians”: and no doubt but it was a precious lot of rubbish that they put on board!

I am sorry to say that the name of that first trading-ship sent to this port remains unknown. But the fact of her sailing is established, as is also the fact that her crew in part was made up of men who had sailed with Hudson in the *Half Moon*. Mr. Brodhead is of the opinion that she was commanded by Hudson's Dutch mate; and he cites the tradition that the Hollanders who came again to this island, and the Indians living here,

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were “much rejoiced at seeing each other”: a cordiality which—however reasonable it might have been on the side of the Dutch—showed that the savages had no endowment of prophetic instinct to warn them that the stars in their courses were fighting against them, and that then was the beginning of their end.

For my present purposes it suffices to say that the briskness with which that first trading voyage was undertaken and accomplished strikes the key-note of Dutch character. Keenness and alertness—not the drowsiness upon which Irving so harps in his persistent pleasantries—were the personal and national characteristics of the people who founded this city; and who founded it, we must remember, in the very thick of their glorious fight for freedom with what then was the first sea power of the world.

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Those qualities clearly were in evidence in their despatch to Manhattan—almost on the instant that Hudson's report of his discovery was made public—of that little nameless merchantman: with the coming of which into this harbor, solely as a trader, the commerce of the port of New York began.

II

THERE was a nice touch of prophetic fitness in the fact that the very first product of skilled labor on our island was a ship; and a still nicer touch—since the commercial supremacy of our city was assured at the outset by its combined command of salt-water and of fresh-water navigation—in the farther fact that that ship was large enough to venture out upon the ocean, and yet was small enough to work her way far into the interior of the continent: up the channels of the thirteen rivers which fall into, or which have their outlet through, New York Bay. And, also, I like to fancy that the spirit of prophecy was upon the Dutch builders

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of that heroically great little vessel when they named her the *Onrust*: because, assuredly, the word “Restless”—in its sense of untiring energy—at once describes the most essential characteristic of, and is the most fit motto for, the city of New York. Indeed, I wish that this early venture in ship-building had been remembered when our civic arms were granted to us; and that then—instead of our beaver and of our later-added wind-mill sails and flour-barrels, full of meaning though those charges are—we had been given a ship for our device, and with it for our motto the pregnant word: “Onrust.”

Our little first ship—built almost in the glowing moment of the city’s founding—was a child of disaster; but all the more for that reason, I think, was the making of her heroic. Following quickly

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in the wake of the little nameless merchantman, other ships were sent to the river Mauritius—as they were beginning to call it in honor of their Stadholder—to win a share of the profits in the newly-opened trade. From Amsterdam were sent the *Fortune*, commanded by Hendrick Christiansen, and the *Tiger*, commanded by Adrien Block; and another ship, also called the *Fortune*, commanded by Cornelis Jacobsen, was sent out from Hoorn. By the year 1613 half a dozen voyages had been made; and by that time, also, there was some sort of a little trading-post here: a group of huts, possibly stockaded, which stood where the Fort stood later and where the irrational walls of the new custom-house are rising now.

The disaster to which the building of the *Onrust* was due was the burning of Block's ship, the *Tiger*, just as he was

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making ready to return in her to Holland—in the autumn of the year 1613. Had Block and his men been of a ruminative habit—the habit that Irving has ascribed to the Dutch generally—they would have meditated the winter through, with their hands in their pockets, upon the disaster that had overtaken them. What they actually did was to set to work instantly to build another vessel. Presumably they saved from the burned *Tiger* what little iron-work they needed (ships in those days were pegged together with wooden pins, which fact accounts for their coming apart so easily and leaking so prodigiously), and for ship-timber there was not need to go farther up town—as we should say nowadays—than Rector Street; very likely there was not need to go so far. And so they buckled down to their work, and by the spring-time of

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the year 1614 the *Onrust* was finished and launched: a yacht, as she was classed, of forty-four feet six inches keel; eleven feet six inches beam; and of "about eight lasts burthen"—that is to say, of about sixteen tons. The Dutch are not a demonstrative race—but I fancy that there was cheering on this island on the day that the *Onrust* slid down the ways!

There is good ground for believing that the ship-yard in which Block and his men worked was close by the present meeting place of Pearl and Broad streets, on the bank of the creek that then flowed where Broad Street now is. It is my very earnest hope that a monument may be set up there to commemorate that great building of our little first ship: the ancestor of all the ships which have been built on this island in the now nearly completed three centuries since she took the

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water; the ancestor of all the ships which will be built on this island in all the centuries to come. And I am the more eager to see my monument erected because at this very time precisely the site for it is being prepared. The purchase of Fraunces's Tavern, for permanent preservation, includes the purchase of a half-block of land at Pearl and Broad streets —whence the modern houses are to be removed, that in their place may be laid out a little park. Possibly the *Onrust* was built on the very piece of land thus to be vacated; almost certainly she was built not a stone's cast from its borders. In that park, therefore, the monument to New York's first ship must stand.

As the direct result of the building of the *Onrust* the Dutch field of American discovery and possession materially was enlarged. Block sailed away in her, in the

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sunshine of that long-past spring-time, to explore the bays and rivers to the eastward—"into which the larger ships of the Dutch traders had not ventured." He laid his course boldly through Hell Gate —it is probable that the *Onrust* was the first sailing vessel to make that perilous passage — and, going onward through Long Island Sound, crossed Narragansett Bay and Buzzard's Bay, coasted Cape Cod, and made his highest northing in "Pye Bay, as it is called by some of our navigators, in latitude $42^{\circ} 30'$, to which the limits of New Netherland extend." As he returned southward he fell in with the *Fortune*, homeward bound from Manhattan, and went back in her to Holland to report upon the new countries which he had found—leaving the *Onrust* to make farther voyages of discovery under the command of Cornelis Hendricksen.

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Block's claim that Pye Bay (in mercy to summer residents upon the North Shore of Massachusetts, we call it Nahant Bay now) marked the limits of New Netherland to the northward was one of those liberal assertions common to the explorers of his day. That claim clashed with claims under English grants, and while it was asserted it was not maintained. But the Dutch did claim resolutely, in their subsequent wranglings with the English, as far north as the Fresh Water —that is to say, the Connecticut river: on the ground that Block was the first European to enter that river, and that the Dutch planted the first European colony upon its banks. On like grounds they claimed, and for a long while held without dispute, the whole of Long Island. Broadly speaking, therefore, the building of the *Onrust* and the voyages made in

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her resulted in bringing within the Dutch "sphere of influence," as we should phrase it nowadays, both shores of Long Island Sound.

The official record of what the *Onrust* accomplished, and of what came of it, was spread upon the minutes of the States General (August 18, 1616) in these words: "Cornelis Henricxs^s, Skipper, appears before the Assembly, assisted by Notary Carel van Geldre, on behalf of Gerrit Jacob Witssen, Burgomaster at Amsterdam, Jonas Witssen, Lambrecht van Tweenhuyzen, Paulus Pelgrom *cum suis*, Directors of New Netherland, extending from forty to five - and - forty degrees, situate in America between New France and Virginia, rendering a Report of the second Voyage, of the manner in which the aforesaid Skipper hath found and discovered a certain country, bay, and three

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rivers [the Housatonic, Connecticut, and Pequod, or Thames] lying between the thirty-eighth and fortieth degree of Latitude (as is more fully to be seen by the Figurative Map) in a small yacht of about eight Lasts, named the *Onrust*. Which little yacht they caused to be built in the aforesaid Country, where they employed the said Skipper in looking for new countries, havens, bays, rivers etc. Requesting the privilege to trade exclusively to the aforesaid countries for the term of four years, according to their High Mightiness's placard issued in March 1614. It is resolved, before determining herein, that the Comparants shall be ordered to render and to transmit in writing the Report that they have made."

III

“THEIR High Mightiness’s placard,” above cited, was an epoch-making document. It had its origin in a joint resolution of the states of Holland and West Vriesland taken March 20, 1614, “on the Remonstrance of divers merchants wishing to discover new unknown rivers countries and places not sought for (nor resorted to) heretofore from these parts”; and it declared that “whoever shall resort to and discover such new lands and places shall alone be privileged to make four voyages to such lands and places from these countries, exclusive of every other person, until the aforesaid four voyages shall have been completed.”

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To make the resolution effective, it was sent up to be confirmed by the Assembly of the United Provinces at The Hague; and there, evidently, it had strong backers who were in a hurry. Their High Mightinesses were not given to acting precipitately. Quite the contrary. But on that occasion—as the result, we reasonably may assume, of very lively lobbying on the part of a delegation sent to The Hague from Amsterdam—the resolution of the states of Holland and West Vriesland was “railroaded” at such a rate that in a single week the Assembly had embodied it (March 27th) in a placard, or proclamation, which gave it the authority of a national law. As the making of Manhattan was the outcome of the local resolution and of the general proclamation which gave it effective force, a pleasing parallel may be drawn between this

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piece of brisk legislation and other pieces of brisk legislation in later times; indeed, it is not too much to assert that the precedent then was established of sending lobbying delegations from New York to Albany—and I see no reason for doubting that The Hague lobby was run then very much as the Albany lobby is run now. Customs and clothes change from one century to another; but it is well to remember (Borbonius and his *omnia mutantur* to the contrary notwithstanding) that the men inside of the customs and the clothes do not change much from age to age.

Without going deeper into this matter of ethics, it suffices here to state that the placard issued by the States General gave the Amsterdam ring what it wanted—but with a commendably greater dignity of expression than usually is found in the

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legislative acts affecting “cities of the first class” which issue from Albany to-day. The charging points of that famous placard are as follows: “Whereas, we understand that it would be honourable serviceable and profitable to this Country, and for the promotion of its prosperity, as well as for the maintenance of seafaring people, that the good Inhabitants should be excited and encouraged to employ and to occupy themselves in seeking out and discovering Passages, Havens, Countries, and Places that have not before now been discovered nor frequented; and being informed by some Traders that they intend, with God’s merciful help, by diligence labour danger and expense, to employ themselves thereat, as they expect to derive a handsome profit therefrom, if it pleased Us to privilege charter and favour them that they alone might

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resort and sail to and frequent the passages havens countries and places to be by them newly found and discovered for six voyages, as a compensation for their outlays trouble and risk. . . . Therefore: We, having duly weighed the aforesaid matter, and finding, as hereinbefore stated, the said undertaking to be laudable honourable and serviceable for the prosperity of the United Provinces, and wishing that the experiment be free and open to all and every of the inhabitants of this country . . . do hereby grant and consent that whosoever from now henceforward shall discover any new Passages Havens Countries or Places shall alone resort to the same or cause them to be frequented for four voyages, without any other person directly or indirectly sailing frequenting or resorting from the United Netherlands to the said newly discovered

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and found passages havens countries or places until the first discoverer and finder shall have made, or caused to be made, the said four voyages: on pain of confiscation of the goods and ships wherewith the contrary attempt shall be made, and a fine of Fifty thousand Netherland Ducats, to the profit of the aforesaid finder or discoverer."

It would seem from the foregoing that the Amsterdam men asked for six voyages and were granted four: even as at Albany "a strike" nowadays is so made that the Assembly may manifest a fine faithfulness to the public interests by cutting it down handsomely—and still give the "strikers" all they want. Again I may observe that in this energetic piece of legislation — obviously rushed through that older Assembly by powerful private interest—there is no very pointed mani-

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festation of the Dutch sleepiness upon which Irving so freely descants.

Indeed, as I have already stated, and as I shall state more at length presently, the Dutch showed a most lively eagerness during the years immediately following Hudson's discovery to seize upon and to develop the North American trade. Broadly, they sought to capture that trade before it fell into the hands of other nations. Narrowly, they sought to wrest it from one another—as may be seen in the fierce contention for trading privileges which went on among themselves. Petitions and counter-petitions for trading rights pestered the local assemblies of the states and the States General. One large company was formed to take, and for a time did take, the whole of the American contract. There was a constant wrangling that disturbed

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the land. Partly to quiet that wrangling, but more to serve high national interests, measures at last were taken which put an end to all rivalries (other than with outsiders) by creating a single powerful corporation to which was granted all trading right to America.

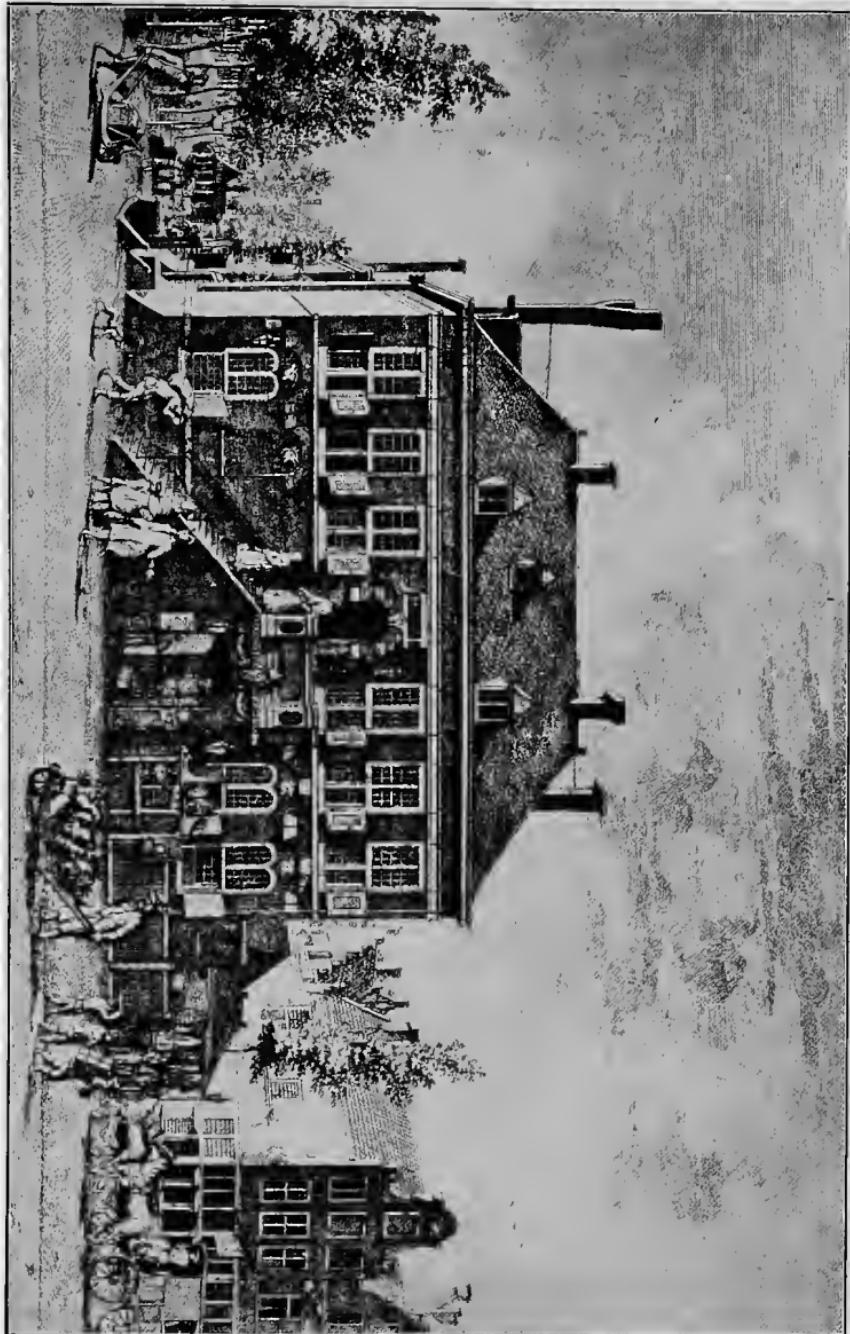
IV

VERY great principles of religion and of state, along with other principles of a strictly commonplace selfish sort, lay at the root of the founding of the Dutch West India Company. In a grand way, that Company was intended to win freedom for the Netherlands by smashing the power of Spain. In a less grand way—but in a way that never was lost sight of—it was intended to line the pockets of the practical patriots who were its stockholders. On its larger lines, as an instrument of justice, and incidentally as an instrument of personal and political revenge, it was to a great extent a success. On its smaller lines, as a commercial in-

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vestment, it was a ruinous failure. We of New York are none the better for its success, and we distinctly are the worse for its failure. That failure gave this city a bad start.

William Usselincx, the originator of the Company, and for thirty years its most persistent promoter, was one of the half million or so of Protestant Belgians who were driven to take refuge in Holland by Spanish persecution. As an Antwerp merchant, under Spanish rule, he had traded to America; and so had come to know that the colonies whence Spain drew her main revenues were at once her strength and her weakness. He realized that those colonies, widely scattered and individually ill-defended, were secure only because they were not attacked; and he farther realized that even a small naval force, resolutely handled, could give a



THE WEST INDIA COMPANY'S HOUSE, HAARLEMMER STRAAT, AMSTERDAM. 1623-1647

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good account of the treasure-fleets which sailed annually from America to Spain. His simple plan, developed from those conditions, was to seize and to sack the richer cities of the Spanish islands and the Spanish main, and to capture such plate-ships as could be caught conveniently upon the sea—with the immediate result of a very satisfactory return in cash from his sackings and capturings, and with an ultimate result of a greater and more far-reaching sort. On that larger side was patriotism. His great purpose was to cripple Spain by seizing her revenues at their source, and still farther to cripple her by breaking her line of communication with that source: both by the actual capture of her treasure-laden ships, and by the threat of capture that would make Spanish ship-masters fearful of their voyage. The threat was a potent one. In

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our own day, when the *Alabama* was afloat, we have seen what such a threat, backed by only a ship or two, will do to wreck the commerce of a nation by driving its vessels to the shelter of foreign flags. In those large days of hard fighting refuge under a foreign flag was a thing unknown. Spain had no choice but to stand up and take Dutch punishment until—and that was intended to be the glorious ending of the struggle — she should be so weakened that her hold upon the Netherlands could be broken for good and all.

It was about the year 1592 that Usselincx broached his heroic project for organizing that private military corporation which anticipated by almost precisely three centuries Mr. Stockton's "Great War Syndicate": an association of financiers who, in a strictly business way, were

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to expel the Spaniards from the Netherlands—and who were to net upon the transaction a profit of from fifty to one hundred per cent. Also, it was on business lines that his project was opposed—but with a mingling in the opposition of considerations of classes and of creeds. The destruction by the Spaniards of the commerce of Antwerp had thrown a large part of that commerce to Rotterdam and Amsterdam. It was asking a good deal, therefore, to ask the Dutch to take a hand in a venture that would bring them to grips with the strongest State in the world; and that would have for its outcome, if successful, the return of the Belgian refugees in triumph to their own country to re-establish—at the cost of their Dutch allies—their lost trade on the Scheldt. John of Barneveldt, as a statesman—perhaps as a somewhat narrow-

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minded statesman—opposed the Belgian plan. Behind him were the town aristocracies of birth and of wealth, the advocates of republicanism, the Arminians. The Belgians had for allies the lower classes in the towns of Holland, the monarchists, the strict Calvinists, and for a rallying centre the House of Orange—the head of which great House, taking a strictly personal interest in the matter, played always and only for his own hand.

The two great parties then formed lasted intact until the French Revolution, and are not extinct even now. For thirty years the fight between them—broadly on the Belgian matter, but with many side issues—was waged vigorously. In the first acute stage of the struggle, 1607–1609, the main issues were war or truce or peace with Spain—and the threat implied by Usselincx's project had much

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to do with compelling Spain to accept the humiliating twelve years' truce that was signed in the year 1609. In the second acute stage, 1617-1619, the main issue was theological: the fight for supremacy between the Calvinists and the Arminians. That fight ended, on May 13, 1619, with the execution of Barneveldt. Then Usselincx's plan was taken up in good earnest: with the result that things began to move forward briskly toward the founding of New York.

I confess that there is a suggestion of anticlimax in treating as mere incidents of that great struggle the wrecking of the power of Spain and the winning of freedom for the United Netherlands; and as its culmination nothing more stirring than the establishment of a fur-traders' camp on a lonely islet nooked in the waters of an almost unknown land. But

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I protest that, for my present purposes, the most important result which flowed from the rise of the Dutch Republic precisely was the establishment of that fur-traders' camp.

V

JUST the same human nature that still is in use showed itself in the fight that went on in the Low Countries during those strenuous thirty years. That much is made clear by the records of the states of Holland and of West Vriesland—where the Belgian party was strongest—and by the records of the States General. But the spicy personal details of the conflict, being hid in the phrases “divers merchants” and “divers traders,” are lost.

On June 21, 1614, when the light sparring of the second round was beginning, a petition of “divers traders of these provinces” was presented to the States General praying for power to form

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“a general Company for the West Indies, the coast of Africa, and through the Straits of Magellan.” The petition was ordered to lie over for four weeks, to the end that “their High Mightinesses may thoroughly examine the matter”; but its opponents—by means which were not recorded in the minutes—managed to keep it in committee for more than two months. It did come up again, however, on the 25th of August; and so vigorously that the Assembly voted “that the business of forming a general West India Company shall be undertaken to-morrow morning.” Again the opposition got in some fine work—and the business was not undertaken on that “to-morrow morning” of nearly three hundred years ago. It was adjourned until September 2d. On that day the two parties came to a clinch—that ended for the Belgian party in a

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clean fall. During the morning the Belgians clearly had the lead, and the Assembly resolved "that the affair of the West India Company shall be continued this afternoon." But it wasn't—and before the West India Company was founded that momentary stoppage had stretched out into nine years. Very interesting would be the record—if it existed, and if we could get at it—of what happened that day at The Hague after the morning session of the Assembly stood adjourned! Having no record to go by, we can only make guesses: being guided a little in our guessing by knowledge of what has happened at Albany, between two sessions of another Assembly, in later times.

A little light is thrown on the situation by an act passed (September 27, 1614) by the states of Holland and West Vriesland: in which is the pointed suggestion

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that under cover of a general company "some may secretly endeavor to pursue trade to Guinea . . . in case the trade to other countries should . . . happen to fail, to be interrupted, or to cease." Possibly, then, the Dutch slave-traders had a hand in "knifing" the bill that day. Some measures in our own Congress were "knifed" by the slave-holding interest much less than three centuries ago. Also, it is fair to assume that the promoters of the New Netherland Company had much to do with the "knifing." Certainly, that Company was chartered only a little more than a month after the West India Company went by the board.

Among the members of the New Netherland Company were Hans Hongers, Paulus Pelgrom, and Lambrecht van Tweenhuysen, owners of the ships *Tiger* and *Fortune*—and therefore the owners

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of the yacht *Onrust*: and the major claim on which they rested their request for special trading privileges was their right to benefit from the discoveries that had resulted from the little yacht's voyage. To that Company the States General granted a charter (October 11, 1614) which gave an exclusive right "to resort to, or cause to be frequented, the aforesaid newly discovered countries situate in America between New France and Virginia, the sea coasts whereof lie in the Latitude of from forty to forty five degrees, now named New Netherland, as is to be seen by a Figurative Map hereunto annexed; and that for four Voyages within the term of three years, commencing the first January 1615 next coming, or sooner."

In that document the name "New Netherland" first was used officially; and

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was used, to quote Mr. Brodhead, to designate the "unoccupied regions of America lying between Virginia and Canada by a name which they continued to bear for half a century—until, in the fullness of time, right gave way to power and the Dutch colony of New Netherland became the English province of New York."

The question of title that Mr. Brodhead raises in this loose statement of fact is far too large a question to be dealt with here. But it is only fair to add that his hot contention that the Dutch had a just right to their North American holding is denied with equal heat by a Dutch authority. The peppery Dr. Asher—in his life of Hudson, prepared for the Hakluyt Society—disposes of the claims of his own countrymen in these words: "The [Dutch] title itself was little better than a shadow.

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It was entirely founded on the boldest, the most obstinate, and the most extensive act of 'squatting' recorded in colonial history. The territory called New Netherland, which the West India Company claimed on account of Hudson's discovery, belonged by the best possible right to England. It formed part of a vast tract of country, the coast of which had been first discovered by English ships, on which settlements had been formed by English colonists, and which had been publicly claimed by England, and granted to an English company before Hudson ever set foot on American ground. But the wilds and wastes of primeval forests were thought of so little value that the Dutch were for many years allowed to encroach upon English rights, without more than passing remonstrance of the British government."

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It is my duty to state the clashing opinions of these two fiery historians; but I have not the effrontery to discuss the question on which, so signally, they are at odds. Nor is discussion necessary. Most happily, that once burning question was quieted by the Treaty of Breda (1667) and has been a dead issue for more than two hundred years.

In the end, as I have written, Usselincx and the Belgians won through. When John of Barneveldt's head ceased to be associated with his body—the equities of that detachment need not here be discussed—opposition to the founding of the West India Company came to an end. The actual establishment of the Company had to be postponed until the expiration of the truce with Spain; but matters immediately were set in train for it, and in the year 1621, upon the

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renewal of hostilities, the act of incorporation (June 3d) was passed.

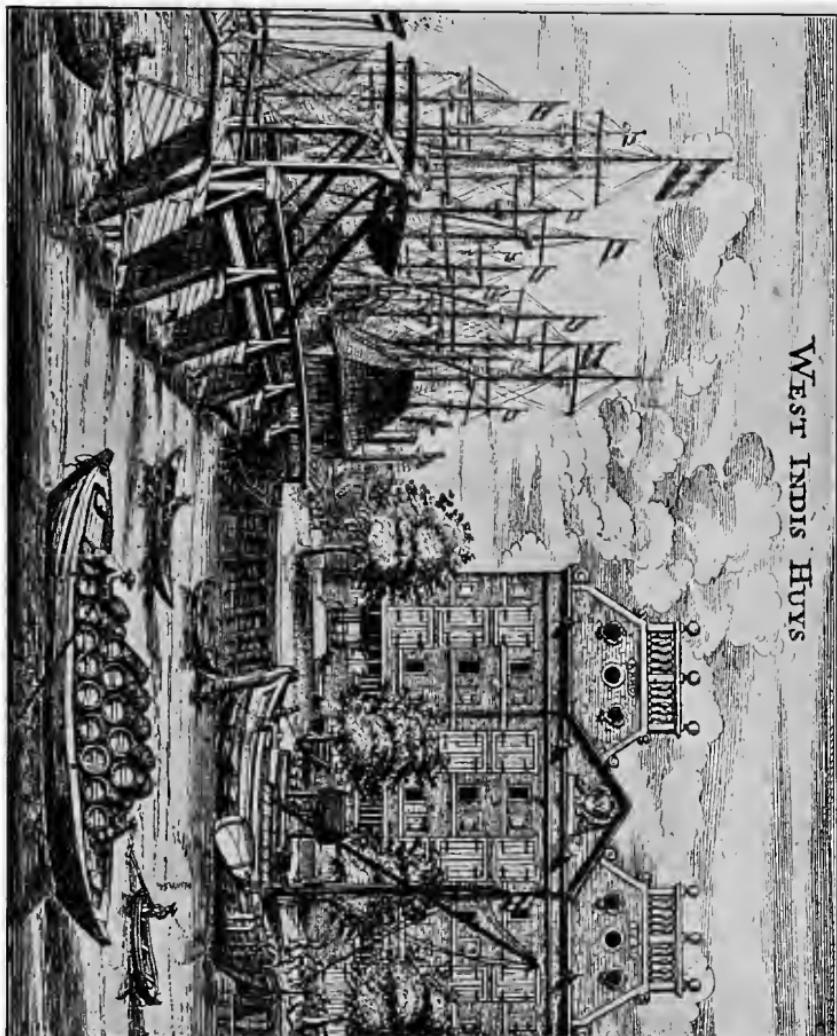
Under the terms of the charter—which, as Mr. Brodhead puts it, “created a sort of marine principality with sovereign rights on foreign shores”—the Company was granted exclusive rights to trade on the coasts of Africa between the Tropic of Cancer and the Cape of Good Hope; to the West Indies; and to the coast of America between New Foundland and the Straits of Magellan: with power to make treaties, to found colonies within those limits, to appoint governors over such colonies, to administer justice in them, and to raise a military force for their defence. Farther, the States General engaged to defend the Company against every person in free navigation and traffic; to “assist” it with a grant of a million guilders; and to give it sixteen

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warships—that the Company was to man and to equip, and to match by raising an equal naval force of its own: the whole fleet to be under the command of an admiral whom the States General should name. Also, the States General reserved the right to confirm or to reject the governors nominated by the Company, and to exercise a general control of its affairs.

Thus, at last, the Dutch West India Company was launched. Had Irving touched upon its history he probably would have attributed the long delay to Dutch sleepiness; and would have given us many neatly-turned pleasantries about the number of pipes smoked drowsily, and about the drowsy talk that went on for thirty years between those stolid Dutch statesmen and those stolid Dutch financiers—all of which would have been

West Indis Huys



THE WEST INDIA COMPANY'S WAREHOUSE AS SEEN FROM THE OUDE SCHANS, AMSTERDAM

(Built in the year 1641. Used as the Company's meeting-place in the years 1647-1674)

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vastly amusing, but would have left something on the side of fact to be desired.

There was substantial cause for that long delay. In addition to the great problems of statecraft that had to be dealt with, the Dutch were dealing with a new great project on new great lines. Their nearest approach to a precedent was the East India Company: of which the primary purpose—as trade went and as peace was understood in those days—was peaceful trade. The primary purpose of the West India Company was war. Its main dividends were expected to come from, and eventually did come from, the capture of Spanish treasure. But provision had to be made for earning money in between whiles—during the close season for treasure-hunting — by employing its armed fleet in ordinary trade: in carrying cargoes of slaves and

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pelttries and other general merchandise of the times. And at every turn conflicting interests, political and commercial, had to be reconciled and brought into line. Nowadays a half-dozen corporation lawyers would get together and would organize such a company in a fortnight; and in another fortnight—under the New Jersey general corporation act—it would have its charter and would be established as a going concern. But we do these things quickly now—being also freed from the trammels of state policy—because we have precedents in abundance to work by, and because we have the tools to work with (I use the phrase with a broad impersonality) lying ready to our hands. To take a strictly legal parallel: any little seventeenth-century English conveyancer was able to get the weather-gauge of the Statute of Uses after

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Orlando Bridgman had shown him how. Yet sleepiness—whatever may be said of its slowness—never has been suggested as a distinguishing characteristic of the seventeenth-century English bar. Nor were the Dutch of that century sleepy. They were very wide awake indeed.

One other point in the making of the West India Company I must touch upon. With the sincere immodesty that is not the least marked of our civic traits, we of New York are accustomed to believe that that Company was organized and chartered mainly for the purpose of exploiting our own New Netherland. Actually, the part that our little island (and its dependent continent) had in that large piece of statecraft was microscopic: as we realize when we consider the great elements—rival trade interests, contending factions, warring creeds—which were

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combined in it under the strangely blended pressure of sordid selfishness and lofty patriotism and hot revenge. Looked at in that way, there is nothing in the history of the Company to stir our vanity. But looked at in another way, even our vanity has its consolations. Although the splendid part that the Company took in fighting to a glorious finish the glorious fight that Holland put up with Spain is not forgotten, its share of honor in a way is lost: being merged into, and almost indistinguishably blended with, the national honor which the Dutch won by a victory that instantly benefited, and that still continues to benefit, the whole civilized world. But the Company shared with no one the glory of planting the city of New Amsterdam, that in time's fulness was to be the city of New York—nor had it, I venture incidentally to assert, the

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least notion that out of that trifling colonial venture any glory ever would come. Yet that most minor of all its accomplishments is precisely the accomplishment that has kept green its memory; that will continue to keep green its memory as long as New York endures.

I hasten to add that we owe the Company no thanks. What it did for the making of our city was done badly—and the very founding of it was barely more than a mere by-blown of chance. In point of fact, the nearest approach to naming New Netherland in the Company's charter was the permissive clause referring to the colonization of "fruitful and unsettled lands." At least, the description is recognizable. While Manhattan no longer is unsettled, it certainly is fruitful still.

VI

EVEN before the West India Company was organized the germ of the destruction of Dutch rule in North America had taken form. In November 1620 the patent had passed the Great Seal by which King James granted to the Plymouth Company "an absolute property in all the American territory extending from the fortieth to the forty-eighth degree of latitude and from the Atlantic to the Pacific." That large-handed grant was qualified, to be sure, by the proviso that colonies might not be planted in any region "actually possessed or inhabited by any other Christian prince or state"; but as England refused to acknowledge

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that the Dutch had any possessions between the Virginia and the New England plantations, and as the English ambassador in Holland, Sir Dudley Carleton, lodged (February 9, 1622) a formal protest against the planting of the New Netherland colony, that proviso was no more than a politely turned phrase. On the other hand, the States General paid very little attention to the protest, and never formally replied to it. However, there it was on the record; and so was in readiness for use. But England went slowly in those days. Almost half a century passed before it was used. Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Alfred Milner were quicker in getting from cause to consequence a couple of years or so ago.

While the ambassadors talked—or maintained a discreet but aggravating silence—the merchants acted. In the

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years while the West India Company was in course of formation the foundation of the sea-wealth of New York was laid. The Dutch planted their trading-post on the island of Manhattan because the many water-ways which came together there obviously made it a good place for trade with the interior of the country. As exploration continued, the fact was demonstrated that it not only was a good place but that it absolutely was the best place for trade on the coast of North America: that there was no other such great land-locked harbor, which at once was near to the sea, easily open to it, and free from the dangers of outlying reefs and shoals; that nowhere else—and this fact continued to count first with us until the time of railroads—was there any such system of interior water-ways as that which made the Sandy Hook Chan-

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nel the inlet to the trade of a vast part, and a vastly rich part, of the continent. Therefore the Dutch shallop went and came on our thirteen rivers—and beyond the shallop service, plying in the upper reaches of those rivers and in countless minor streams, was a still farther-reaching service of canoes. And all of that trade ebbed from and flowed to this island of Manhattan: where the round-bellied Dutch ships linked it with and made it a part of the commerce of the world. Even a minor prophet, with those geographical facts in his possession, would not have hesitated to prophesy a great future for such a seaport with such a hold upon the land.

When the West India Company came into existence it therefore had among its assets—although ignored in its chartered list of assets—a little trading-post that

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was in the way of promotion to be the capital of a flourishing colony, had there been manifested even a very small amount of common sense and common justice in the management of its affairs. And at the beginning—being stimulated to wise action, perhaps, by the English assertion of a counter claim to their American possessions—the Company did go at the planting of New Netherland with a certain show of energy, and on lines of broader policy than were called for by the mere requirements of trade.

Upon the completion of the Company's organization the management of the affairs of New Netherland were confided by the Directorate, the Council of XIX., to the Chamber of Amsterdam—whence came the name that was given to the settlement on Manhattan Island—and by that Chamber the first ship-load

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of colonists, thirty families, was despatched from the Texel in the ship *New Netherland* in March 1623. Making their course to the westward by a long reach into the south—as was the habit of the Dutch navigators, who ever were fearful of North Atlantic storms—they touched at the Canaries and at Guiana, and then beat up the coast to Sandy Hook and made their harbor early in May. (Possibly our otherwise unaccounted-for custom of May-day movings had its origin in their arrival about May-day, and the consequent running of their yearly tenures from that date.) They were of good stuff, those colonists—mostly Walloons, very eager to get away from European religious intolerance for good and all. Their coming marks the real founding of New York. They were the first Europeans who came to dwell upon this island with the inten-

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tion of spending their lives here; and, in the end—though that part of their intention was understood rather than stated—of making themselves permanently a part of it by being buried in its soil.

Meantime, by way of fortifying the situation politically, the States General erected into a Province the West India Company's comet - like holding — which had a tiny material head upon the sea-board, and a vast vaporous tail that extended vaguely across the continent westward — and gave it, as a Province, the heraldic rank and bearings of a Count.

Then it was that our beloved Beaver came to us: the same worthy animal who still figures gallantly in the arms of the city of New York. As we first received him, he was the single charge—"a beaver proper"—upon our shield, above which a count's coronet was our crest.

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Later, when new civic arms were granted to us by the English Crown—in the time of great commercial prosperity that followed upon the passage of the Bolting Act—he modestly joined the wind-mill sails and the flour-barrels, and so became a mere beaver “in chief and in base.” And there he remains to this day: in lasting memorial of the fact that the foundation of the sea-wealth of this city was laid in its trade in furs.

VII

AT the outset, the venture undertaken by the West India Company was a profitable one: not on the side of trade, but on the side of war. Three great successes marked the first ten years of the Company's existence: the taking of Bahia (1624), the capture of the treasure fleet (1628), and the reduction of Pernambuco (1630). Of those three events, although the Brazilian conquests counted for more in the long run, the capture of the plate-ships naturally made the strongest impression upon the popular mind. Indeed, that magnificent cash return upon invested patriotism is talked about relishingly in Holland even until

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this present day. And it is not surprising. Never has there been such a bag of treasure in modern times! Admiral Peter Heyn, leaving out of the account the vessels which he sunk with their treasure in them, brought home to Holland seventeen galleons laden with bullion and merchandise valued, according to Dr. Asher, at more than fourteen—or, according to the more conservative Mr. Brodhead, at more than twelve millions of guilders; and the Dutch guilder of that period, it must be remembered, had a purchasing value not much less than that of our dollar of to-day. Either estimate is prodigious—and on the strength of those huge winnings the Company declared upon its paid-up capital a dividend variously estimated by the same authorities at fifty and at seventy-five per cent. Neither the Standard Oil Com-

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pany nor the Steel Trust as yet has equalled that!

But it was not a wholesome sort of money-making. "Successful war thus poured infatuating wealth into the treasury of the West India Company," is the view that Mr. Brodhead takes of it; and he adds that when, in the ensuing year, the King of Spain made overtures to renew the truce "the pride, the avarice, and the religious sentiment of Holland were united in continuing the war." Against the truce the Company addressed to the States General (November 16, 1629) a formal remonstrance. "We have at present," declared the remonstrants, "over one hundred full-rigged ships of various burdens at sea . . . manned by fifteen thousand seamen and soldiers and armed with over four hundred metal pieces . . . and over two thousand swiv-

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els, beside pedereros to the number of far beyond six hundred.” That fleet had not sailed the seas, nor was it intended to sail the seas, for mere amusement—as the remonstrants implied by adding that “during some consecutive years” they had “plundered the enemy and enriched this country” by bringing into it great stores of indigo, sugar, hides, cochineal and tobacco; and, above all, by bringing in the captured galleons—which contained “so great a treasure that never did any fleet bring to this or to any other country so great a prize.” And they ended by declaring that they had exhausted the King of Spain’s treasury by these various appropriations of his property, and by “depriving him of so much silver, which was as blood from one of the arteries of his heart.” But the pith of their argument was in their assertion—in which

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was more of truth than they suspected—that “the utter ruin and dissolution of this Company will be the result of the present negotiations for a truce.”

It was reasonable that the Company should be so hot for keeping on with the war. Spanish treasure-ships were to be had for the mere taking—and the Dutch found taking them very easy work indeed. It is a curious fact that the Spaniards—who have done some very pretty fighting at one time and another on land—never were hard to whip at sea. From the Armada down to Santiago their naval record is a shabby one. We hammered them pretty much as we pleased in the nineteenth century; so did the English in the eighteenth; so did the Dutch in the seventeenth—the time that I here am dealing with; and so, I believe thoroughly, would the English have ham-

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mered the whole Armada in the sixteenth had they not sublet a part of their contract to the winds and the waves.

The battlings of the Dutch and the Spaniards have a distinct place in our commercial annals, because one of their direct results was to check our commercial growth at the start. The "infatuating wealth" that poured in upon the West India Company tended to make it careless of the little colony of New Netherland, and also to make it resentful of the small return which that colony yielded upon the relatively large outlay required to keep it in running order: and so led to the adoption of the "squeezing" policy which handicapped the trade of the colonists and in the end destroyed their loyalty and made them welcome the change to English rule. Mr. Brodhead is within the mark in his observation:

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“It was an evil day for New Netherland when the States General committed to the guardianship of a close and grasping mercenary corporation the ultimate fortunes of their embryo province in America.”

In a report presented to the States General (October 23, 1629) the feeling of the Company in regard to its colony is made plain. “The people conveyed by us thither have . . . found but scanty means of livelihood up to the present time; and have not been any profit, but a drawback, to this Company. The trade carried on there in peltries is right advantageous; but, one year with another, we can at most bring home fifty thousand guilders.”

Yet with that return, at that time, the Company should have been well satisfied. In *The Planter's Plea*, published in

EARLIEST KNOWN VIEW OF NEW AMSTERDAM. CIRCA 1630

Reversed (following Mr. J. H. Innes) from Joost Hartger's *Beschrijvingh van Virginia, Nieuw Nederlandt, etc.*



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London in the year 1630, the English author wrote that the colonists of New Netherland "appeared to subsist in a comfortable manner, and to promise fairly both to the State and to the undertakers." The trouble was that "the undertakers" wanted too much and wanted it too soon. In the year 1629 the population of the colony could not have exceeded three hundred and fifty souls; and three hundred and fifty people very well might "subsist in comfort" on an export trade of fifty thousand guilders a year. The Company in short, then and always, was greedy. By holding New Netherland as an investment rather than as a trust, by laying heavy imposts upon commerce in order to raise dividends, it throttled the trade that a less selfish policy would have left free to expand.

The one sort of private ownership in

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the colony that was encouraged—by the granting of little principalities to patroons, who were free within certain limitations to trade on their own account —told directly against the welfare of the mass of the colonists by creating unfair distinctions of class. It was a transplanting of feudalism to America—and feudalism did not thrive in American soil. Actually, the patroonships were bagged by an inside ring of the Company's directors—the practical value of being on the ground floor was understood in those days quite as well as we understand it now—and the outcome of that intrinsically bad policy bred evil in two ways. It created dissension in the management of the Company's affairs at home by arraying inside private interests against the common interests of the shareholders at large; and in the colony

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the same private interests were arrayed against the common interests of the less-favored colonists. Later, the supply of arms which the savages obtained from the patroon trading-posts—but by no means only from those sources: trading guns for peltries was so profitable an illegal transaction that everybody was keen to have a hand in it—led on directly to the horrors of the Indian wars.

VIII

IN a word, atrociously bad government was the rule almost from the beginning until quite the end of the Dutch domination of New Netherland. Execrable administration in Holland led to execrable executive management in the colony. Excepting May (1624) and Verhulst (1625), who were little more than factors, the men sent out as governors (the official title was Director General) wretchedly neglected or absolutely betrayed the interests which they were sworn to serve.

Kieft (1638-1646) was an easy first in that bad lot. He was an ex-bankrupt, whose bankruptcy had been of such sort that his portrait had been hung up on the

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town gallows. Against him, unrefuted, stood the pleasing charge of having embezzled ransom-money intrusted to him to rescue Christian captives held by the Turks. His evil work in New Netherland culminated in his provocation—by a horrid and utterly inexcusable massacre of savages—of the terrible Indian war of 1643: which brought the colony to the very verge of ruin, and which aroused so violent an outcry against him on the part of the colonists that he was recalled. In a way, justice was served out to him: he went down, his sins with him, in the wreck of the ship in which he took passage for home. But while Kieft holds the record for worse than incapacity, protests were made by the colonists against the doings of every one of the Directors—and always for cause. Each of them played first for his own

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hand. After caring for himself, his care was for what remained of the interests of the Company—and those he either muddled or marred. Caring for the interests of the colonists, in every case, was the last consideration of all. Under those conditions, of necessity, discontent was chronic among the inhabitants of the Province from first to last.

On the other hand, I am persuaded that an archangel would have had his work cut out for him had he tried to govern at once wisely and acceptably the hustling, greedy, law-defying Dutchmen who dwelt in New Netherland two hundred and fifty years ago. By combining the atrocities of the Congo Free State under Lothair's administration (paralleled here by Kieft's atrocities) with the corruption at Johannesburg under Kruger's administration (paralleled here

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by the corruption that obtained continuously under Dutch rule) we may get a fair notion of what our few respectable ancestors on this island had to contend with, and of what our many unrespectable ancestors actually were.

The saving salt of those days was found in the few men who stood resolutely for good government and for honest ways. They would have been called mugwumps, had that word then been available for use; and no doubt they did receive some equivalent derogatory Dutch name. The most exemplary of that small but honorable company was David Pietersz de Vries: who strove hard to avert the Indian war waged by the outrageous Kieft, and who stood as distinctly for all that was good in the colony as Kieft stood for all that was bad. Had De Vries been appointed Director, in-

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stead of Kieft, we should have been saved from the blackest crime recorded in our colonial history; and had he been continued in office, in Stuyvesant's place, the colony would not have fallen into such disorder as to give the English a mere walk-over when their time for absorbing it came. No governor could have prevented that absorption. It was inevitable. But the community taken over from De Vries would have been far sounder morally than was that which was taken over from Stuyvesant; and therefore would have been less likely to degenerate into a nest of pirates and smugglers, as it did degenerate, during the first thirty years of English rule.

Precisely what sort of government we had here under the governors appointed by the West India Company was set forth with a refreshing candor in the

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famous Remonstrance—and in its accompanying Memorial — presented by the colonists to the States General in the year 1649. Incidentally, the tone of those documents—which are informed by the petty spitefulness of mean spirits—makes also an ugly case against their authors; and the case is all the stronger because it is to be read between the lines of their complainings and is an altogether unconscious arraignment of themselves. But this fact, while it tends to palliate the minor charges against Stuyvesant—whose high-handed ways with his subjects, and whose coarsely expressed contempt for them “in language better befitting the fish-market than the Council board,” probably were not without justification—does not weaken the major charge of misgovernment preferred against him and against the Company’s

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representatives generally; nor does it lessen the reasonableness of the several specific requests for reforms in law and in administration for which the remonstrants prayed.

The Remonstrance—a document that fills forty-four printed quarto pages—is a history of the planting of New Netherland, a description of the country, a statement of the wrongs suffered by the colonists, and a prayer for certain specified easements and reliefs. It was drawn up, presumably, by Adriaen van der Donck. It was signed by Van der Donck, Heermans, Hardenburg, Couwenhoven, Loockermans, Kip, Van Cortlandt, Jansen, Hall, Elbertsen, and Bout. Three of the signers, Van der Donck, Couwenhoven, and Bout, were delegated to take it to Holland and to lay it before the authorities at The Hague.

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"In the infancy of this country" [wrote the complainants] "the Directors [the Board of Directors of the West India Company] adopted wrong plans, and in our opinion looked more to their own profit than to the country's welfare, and trusted more to interested than to sound advice. This is evident from the unnecessary expenses incurred from time to time; the heavy accounts from New Netherland; the taking of colonies [land grants] by Directors; their carrying on commerce, to which end trade has been regulated, and finally from not colonizing the country. . . . Had the Hon^{ble} West India Company attended in the beginning to population instead of incurring great expense for things unnecessary . . . which through bad management and calculation came wholly to little or nothing, notwithstanding the excessive expenditure . . . the place might now be of considerable importance. . . .

"Trade, without which, when lawful, no country prospers, has also fallen off so much in consequence of the Company's acts that it is without a parallel, and more slavish than free, owing to high duties and all the inspections and trouble that accompany it. We highly approve of inspection according to the orders given by

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the Company to its officers, and so far as 'tis done to check smugglers, who have ruined the country, and now go out from all parts; but it ought, nevertheless, be executed without partiality, which is not always the case. The duty is high; of inspection and seizures there is no lack, and thus lawful trade is turned aside —except some little which is carried on only *pro forma*, in order to push smuggling under this cloak. Meanwhile the Christians are treated almost like Indians in the purchase of necessaries which they cannot do without; this causes great complaint, distress and poverty. Thus, for example: The merchants sell their dry goods, which are subject to little loss, at a hundred per cent. advance, and that freely, according as there is a demand for, or a scarcity of, this or that article; petty traders who bring small lots and others who speculate, buy up those goods from the merchants and sell them again to the common people who cannot do without them, often at another advance of cent per cent., more or less, according as they are persuaded or disposed. More is taken on liquors, which are subject to a considerable leakage, and . . . the goods are disposed by the first, second, and third hands at an advance of one and two

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hundred and more per cent. It would be impossible for us to enumerate all the practices that are had recourse to for the purpose of promoting self or individual interest; whilst little thought is bestowed on introducing people into the country. . . . It also has been seen how the letters of the Eight Men have been treated, and the result; besides many additional orders and instructions which are not known to us, and are alike ruinous. But laying this aside for the present, with a word now and again by way of remark, let us proceed to examine how their [the Company's] servants, and the Directors [of New Netherland] and their friends, have fattened here from time to time, having played with their employers and the people as the cat plays with the mouse. . . . We shall pass over the beginning . . . and treat only of the two last sad and senseless extravagances—we should say administrations—of Director Kieft, which is now in truth past, but its evil consequences remain; and of Director Stuyvesant, which still stands—if that can be said to stand which lies completely prostrate. . . . Previous to Director Kieft's bringing the unnecessary war upon the country, his principal aim and object was to take good care of him-

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self and to leave behind him a great name, but without any expense either to himself or to the Company. . . . With that view he considered the erection of a church very necessary. . . . The Director wished and insisted that it should be located in the Fort, where it was erected in spite of the others. And, truly, the location is as suitable as a fifth wheel to a coach; for, besides being small, the Fort lies on a point, which would be of more importance in case of population; the church, which ought to be owned by the people who defrayed the expense of its construction, intercepts and turns aside the Southeast wind from the gristmill which stands in that vicinity; and this is also one of the causes [!] why a scarcity of bread prevails frequently in summer for want of grinding. But this is not the sole cause; for the mill is neglected, and having been leaky most of the time, it has become decayed and somewhat rotten, so that it cannot now work with more than two arms, and has gone on thus for all of five years. But returning to the church, from which the gristmill has for the moment diverted us, the Director concluded, then, to have one built and on the spot which he preferred. He lacked money—and where was this to be got? It

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happened, about this time, that Everardus Bogardus, the clergyman, gave in marriage a daughter, by his first wife. The Director thought this a good time for his purpose, and set to work after the fourth or fifth drink; and he himself setting a liberal example, let the wedding guests sign whatever they were disposed to give towards the church. Each, then, with a light head, subscribed away at a handsome rate, one competing with the other; and although some heartily repented it when their senses came back, they were obliged, nevertheless, to pay—nothing could avail against it. The church, then, was located in the Fort, in opposition to every one's opinion. The honor and ownership of that work must be inferred from the inscription, which, in our opinion, is somewhat ambiguous, and reads thus: 'Anno 1642. Willem Kieft, Directeur Generael, heeft de gemeente desen temple doen bouwen.' But, laying that aside, the people nevertheless paid for the church."

That is the tone of the Remonstrance throughout. In a petty spirit it dealt with petty grievances at a length out of all proportion to their importance, and

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left what evidently were substantial grievances—as the high duties and the manifold inspections—far from clearly explained. That the complainants dismissed in a few lines the greatest of all the colonial crimes against good government and against humanity, Kieft's Indian war, was not surprising. The wreck of colonial interests which had been brought about by that war was well understood in Holland. There was no need that it should be explained.

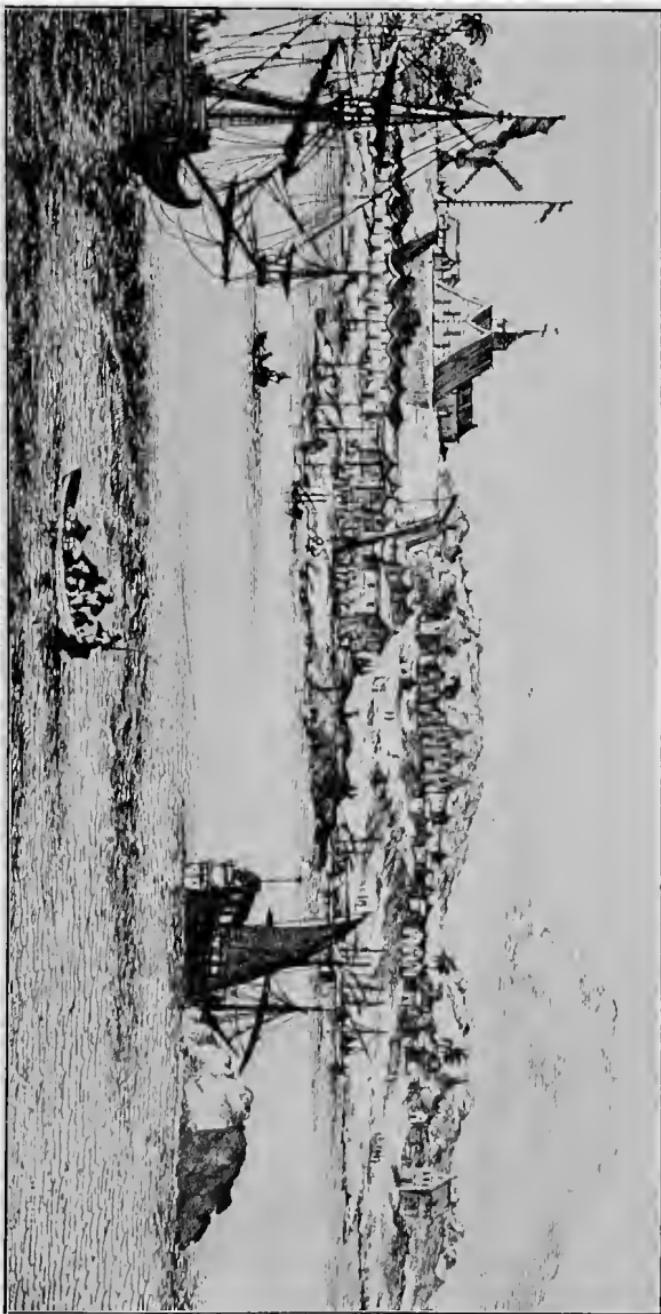
IX

COLONIAL discontent usually is reasonable, and always is natural. It is reasonable, because colonies are pretty certain to be neglected, or remembered only to be harshly dealt with, by the home government. It is natural, because of the qualities pretty certainly inherent in colonists: who for the most part are either untried young men of strong character who know little of the world but are eager to make their way in it quickly, or incapable middle-aged men who have failed at home yet desperately hope to mend their broken fortunes abroad. Of the small residuum, the men who settle down to work and

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who silently and steadfastly build their own fortunes by subduing a savage land, very little ever is heard. It is the "kickers" who make the noise. Here in America our sympathies always have been on the colonial side, and our animosities against home governments in general always have been strong. Perhaps, now that we are in the way of being (somewhat unwillingly) a "world power" ourselves, with swaggering and blustering colonies of our own, our point of view may change. It even is conceivable that in time we may come to have quite a compassionating fellow-feeling for our once tyrant, the late King George the Third!

Actually, in spite of bad laws badly administered, the colony of New Netherland did make headway. This country was a rich country, and its exploitation



VIEW OF NEW AMSTERDAM. CIRCA 1650. SHOWING THE CAPSKE ROCKS, NOW COVERED BY BATTERY PARK
(From the *Beschrijvingh van Amerika* of Arnoldus Montanus. Amsterdam, 1671).

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—even under heavy handicaps—yielded a good return. In the year 1624 the cargo of furs sent home by Director May, “as a first year’s remittance from New Netherland,” sold for 28,000 guilders. Two years later the showing was still better. Under date of November 5, 1626, the following report was sent from Amsterdam to the States General:

“Yesterday arrived here the ship the *Arms of Amsterdam*, which sailed from New Netherland, out of the River Mauritius, on the 23d of September. They report that our people are in good heart and live in peace there. The women also have borne some children there. They have bought the Island Manhatten from the Indians for the value of 60 guilders—’tis 11,000 morgens [about 22,000 acres] in size. They had all their grain sowed by the middle of May, and reaped by the middle of August. They send thence samples of summer grain—such as wheat, rye, barley, oats, buckwheat, canary-seed, beans, and flax. The cargo of the aforesaid ship is: 7246 beaver skins, 178½ otter skins, 675 otter

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skins, 48 minck skins, 36 wild cat skins, 33 mincks, 34 rat skins. Considerable oak timber and hickory."

Charles Wooley, writing half a century later, gives these values: "beaver skins, ordinary, 10 shillings; beaver skins, black, 15 shillings; minck skins, 5 shillings; otter skins, ordinary, 8 shillings; otter skins, black, if very good, 20 shillings." Roughly estimated, and without allowance for the fall in the value of peltries in that half century, the value of the cargo of the *Arms of Amsterdam* therefore was not less than \$25,000—or well above \$50,000, in the values of to-day. In another way the manifest of that ship is interesting. It is the earliest known manifest of a ship clearing from this port. The cargo seems to have been an exceptional one. In the year 1628 the exports hence "in two ships" is given at 61,000 guilders—only a

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trifle above the value of the lading of that single ship four years earlier—and for the years 1629-30 the exports were valued at 130,000 guilders. In the year 1632 the exports of furs alone were valued at 140,000 guilders, and in the year 1635 at 135,000 guilders. I must add, however, that the figures of that early time have a wandering way with them that places them anywhere but above reproach. Yet they show, at least, that returns of a respectable sort began almost immediately to come in from the colony, and that those returns increased from year to year.

With the development of trade between the colony and the home country went also the development of a trade that was wholly colonial. By the year 1635 a considerable commerce was carried on between New Netherland and

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New England—of which the less important part was direct, and the more important part was the carriage of tobacco and salt from Virginian and West Indian ports to Boston. The suggestive fact also is recorded that in the year 1637 a Dutch ship sailing direct from the Texel landed in Boston a cargo of sheep and oxen and Flanders mares. Naturally, the English did not take kindly to such commercial under-cutting; and all the more naturally because the Dutch stiffly refused to permit English traders to come upon their own colonial preserves.

Touching those preserves, there was a sharp little clashing of rights in April 1633, when the *William*, a London ship commanded by a renegade Dutchman, came into this port “to trade at Hudson’s river”—and peremptorily was refused a trading license. There was a fine inter-

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change of bravadoes between Director Van Twiller and the *William*'s captain. Flags were run up and salutes were fired, and there was a vast amount of vaporizing talk on the Director's side. But at the end of it all the ship did go up the river —being the first English vessel to ascend the Hudson—and her captain would have made his trade unmolested had not De Vries put some stiffening into Van Twiller's weak backbone. "If it had been my case," said De Vries, shortly and hotly, "I should have helped him from the Fort to some eight-pound iron beans!" "The English," he added, and his remark has quite a modern ring in it, "are of so haughty a nature that they think everything belongs to them"; and he concluded by declaring with energy: "I should send the ship *Soutberg* after him and drive him out of the river!" And

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that was precisely what Van Twiller, being thus brought up to the collar, then did.

It was not in human nature, therefore, for the English quietly to permit Dutch ships to trade in English colonial ports when English ships were refused trading privileges in Dutch colonial ports; and, as a matter of fact, the profitable trade that was developed between New Netherland and the plantations in New England and Virginia—while immediately beneficial to the Dutch—was one of the most active of the several causes which led to the wresting from the Dutch of their holding in North America. The matter is too broad in its scope to be dealt with fully here; yet am I loath to relinquish it because of the many very human touches in which it abounds.

With one scrap of ancient history,

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wherein the humanity still is fresh and strong, I am justified in dealing: the famous case of the ship *Eendracht*—driven by stress of weather into Plymouth in the year 1632, and there seized by the English port authorities (I quote the Dutch version of the matter) “on an untrue representation that the Peltries were bought within the jurisdiction or district belonging to his majesty of Great Britain.” Over that seizure there was a diplomatic squabble between Holland and England that went on for years—and the whole of it, I am persuaded, was the outcome of a love-affair! According to a letter sent by the States General to their Ambassador in England, the *Eendracht* was “seized on false information of the Provost of said ship . . . and of the Pilot who, in opposition to the Director and Skipper, being on shore got married.”

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There is the crux of it, I am sure. But for that Pilot's impetuously inopportune determination to wed the widow (I am quite certain that she was a widow, because of the eagerness of it all) he very probably could have taken the *Eendracht* out of Plymouth harbor and safe away to sea. Being ordered, no doubt, to do that very thing—and the widow ashore waiting for him!—he and his friend the Provost laid the “untrue representation” which led on to those years of diplomatic blustering: but which also led to the detention of the ship at Plymouth until he was safe wed to his bouncing bride!

After all, what mattered it if Holland and England were embroiled by that brave Pilot's hot-hearted indiscretion? Every man thinks first of his own happiness; and in love-affairs—it has been so

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from the world's beginning—he thinks of nothing else. I wish that we had the end of the story. Let us hope that his widow repaid him for his gallant defiance, for her sweet sake, of the orders of captains and directors, and that it turned out well—that sailor-wedding which shook two great states to their foundations nearly three centuries ago! In all seriousness, I am justified in recalling here that only half-told and long-forgotten idyl. It had its place, the love-making of that precipitate Pilot, among the causes which in time's fulness changed New Netherland and New Amsterdam into the State and City of New York.

X

UNDER spur of the “remonstrances”—there were many of them—sent home by the colonists, the States General did make some effort to deal with New Netherland on lines of equity. An official inquiry was made into the affairs of the West India Company in the year 1638 that resulted in checking some of the worst of the colonial abuses; and that also led to the promulgation (1640) of a new charter of Liberties and Exemptions which materially added to the welfare of the colony, and increased the comfort of the colonists, by relaxing the regulations under which trade was conducted and

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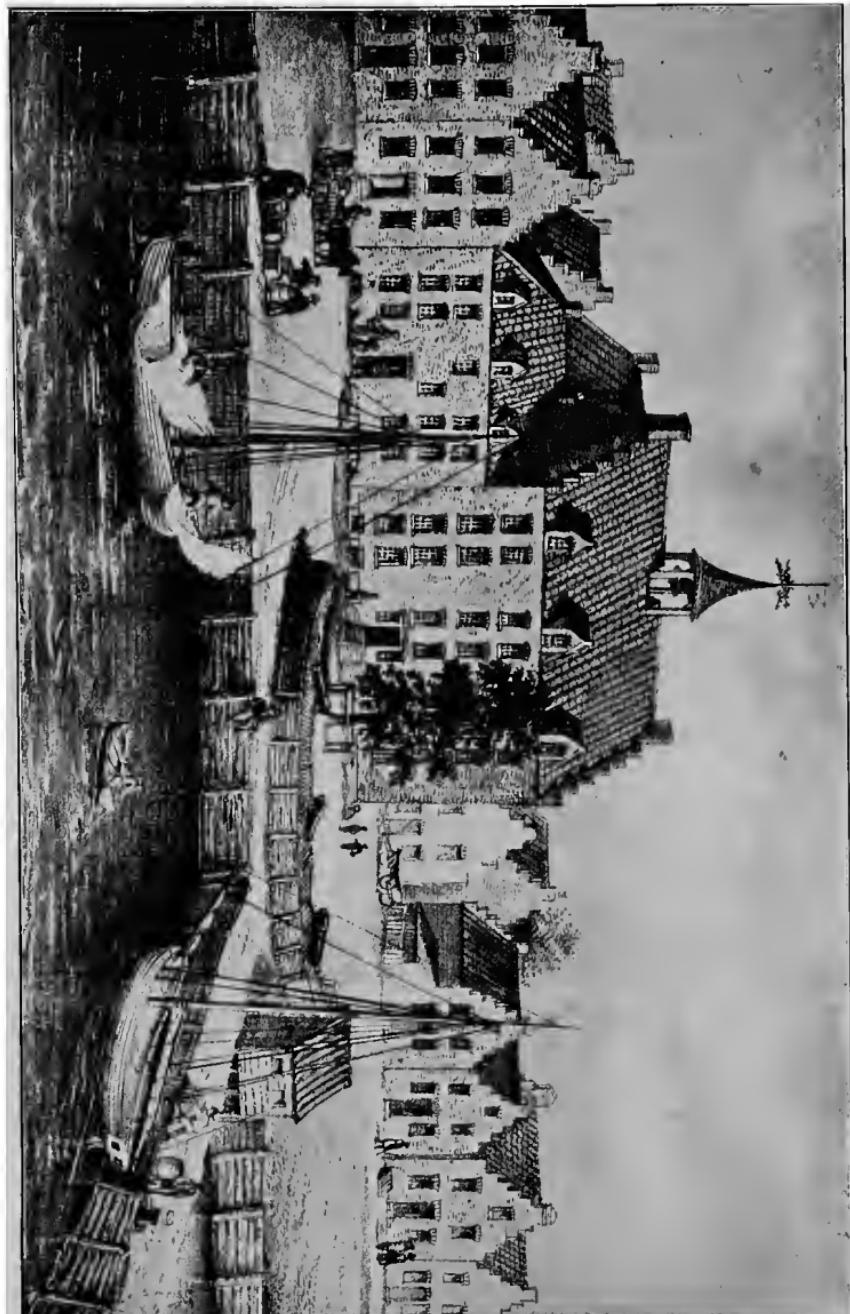
by easing the conditions under which the people lived.

Kieft, be it said to his credit, gave effect to this liberal policy in so liberal a spirit that the three ensuing years—until almost ruin came with the Indian war—probably were the most prosperous in the time of Dutch rule. Notably, he encouraged English refugees, fleeing from religious persecution in New England, to settle in New Netherland; and those settlers—maintaining relations with their friends and kinsfolk—did much to develop the intercolonial trade of which I have written above. By the year 1642 the English were so numerous in New Amsterdam that the appointment of an official interpreter became necessary; and that officer also was required to serve as an intermediary between the Dutch merchants and the English ship-masters who

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broke the voyage between New England and the Virginia plantations by stopping here for a bit of trade.

It was for the accommodation of such wayfarers that the City Tavern—which later became the Stadt Huys—was built, facing Coenties Slip, in the year 1642; and it seems to have been built badly, as it manifested such a decided disposition to tumble to pieces in little more than half a century that it was torn down. I should be glad to believe that hospitality was the corner-stone of that nominally hospitable edifice; but I fancy that in building it some thought may have been taken of the fact that trade in a tavern is apt to turn in favor of the trader who has the hardest head—and it is an incontestable fact that our Dutch ancestors had heads upon which they could rely. Possibly some of those



THE TOWN HOUSE (STADT HUY'S), NEW YORK, 1679

(Redrawn from the Dankers and Slyter drawing. See *Memoirs of the Long Island Historical Society*, vol. i.)

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visiting English skippers carried away in their aching heads unkindly memories of our City Tavern—as they beat down the harbor and out through the Narrows on their way to Virginia, or as they affronted the dangers of Hell Gate on their way eastward up the Sound!

The encouragement that Kieft gave to the incoming of the English, and to the trade with the neighboring English colonies, tended to the immediate good of New Netherland; but in the end, of course, the influx of those settlers, and the straining of relations with the government to which they owed allegiance, were the chief factors in hastening the downfall here of Dutch rule. George Baxter, the official interpreter — he seems to have been a fuming sort of a person—was one of the leaders of the rebellion that broke out among the English on Long Island

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in the year 1655; a rebellion that Stuyvesant's temporizing policy did not check, and that helped to give a valuable part of New Netherland to the English nine years before they grabbed it all.

In another way Kieft's liberal administration of more liberal laws led on to catastrophe. The increased freedom in trading tended to facilitate the supply of arms—in exchange for good bargains in peltries—to the savages; and so enabled the savages to make their winning fight when, by Kieft's own abominable act, the time for fighting came. From the very beginning the trade in arms with the Indians offered temptations too strong to be resisted by the money-seeking Dutch—just as it has offered temptations too strong to be resisted by the money-seekers of our own time on our western frontier. Under Kieft it went on swim-

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mingly. In those days a musket sold for twenty beaver skins, and a pound of gunpowder was worth in furs from ten to twelve guilders: and so the "bosch-lopers," or "runners in the woods," made their account with the savages—and gave no thought to the reaping of the whirlwind that was to come in sequence to that sowing of the wind.

Actually, the "bosch-lopers" were mere agents. The sources of supply of that pernicious trade were the capitalists of the colony. In the year 1644 a ship sent out from Holland by the Patroon of Rensselaerswyck — being searched by mere accident at New Amsterdam—was found to have on board, not on her manifest, "four thousand pounds of powder and seven hundred pieces, to trade with the natives." The illicit cargo was confiscated with a great show of pro-

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priety: but I do not doubt that the powder and the pieces got along to the natives in due course. In Stuyvesant's time (July 9, 1648) "Govert Barent, the armourer at Fort Amsterdam," and three others were arrested, and two of the four "were convicted and sentenced to death for violating the proclamation against the illicit trade in fire-arms." But the convicted and sentenced ones were not executed. "By the intervention of many good men" they got off from the hanging which they richly deserved, and nothing worse happened to them than the confiscation of their illegally held property. In other words, public sentiment was in favor of the trade—in which, practically, everybody desired to have a hand—and no real attempt was made to suppress it because the rulers of the colony shared the popular feeling

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and either were weak or were venal, and for the most part were both. The responsibility for that sin, as for many others, therefore rests primarily with the West India Company: which without exception, from Van Twiller's time onward, appointed as Directors of New Netherland men utterly unfitted to perform the gravely important duties with which they were charged.

As was shown by the official inquiries made from time to time into the affairs of the colony, usually followed by small reforms, the Dutch government was not wholly unmindful of the evils wrought by the mercenary corporation to which it had delegated too great powers; but, the initial error of delegating those powers having been committed, not even the States General could set right what had begun by being, and what continued

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until the end to be, hopelessly wrong. From the start, that ill-conceived colonial venture had in it the seeds of failure. The wonder is not that it ended so soon, but that it lasted so long.

XI

WHEN Peter Stuyvesant, the last of those incompetent Directors, took over the government of New Netherland (May 11, 1647) things were in a hopelessly bad way. Mr. Brodhead, whose disposition is to make the best of Dutch shortcomings, thus summarizes the situation: "Excepting the Long Island settlements, scarcely fifty bougeries could be counted; and the whole province could not furnish, at the utmost, more than three hundred men capable of bearing arms. The savages still were brooding over the loss of sixteen hundred of their people. Disorder and discontent prevailed among the commonalty; the public

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revenue was in arrear, and smuggling had almost ruined legitimate trade; conflicting claims of jurisdiction were to be settled with the colonial patroons; and jealous neighbors all around threatened the actual dismemberment of the province. Protests had been of no avail; and the decimated population, which had hardly been able to protect itself against the irritated savages, could offer but a feeble resistance to the progress of European encroachment. Under such embarrassing circumstances the last Director General of New Netherland began his eventful government." And to this Mr. Brodhead might have added in set terms what he does add virtually by his subsequent presentation of facts: that Peter Stuyvesant, so far from being the man to set a wrong-going colony right, was precisely the man to set a right-going colony wrong.

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Irving, with his accustomed genial warping of the truth, has created so kindly a caricature of the last of the Dutch governors that our disposition is to link him with, almost to exalt him to the level of, the blessed Saint Nicholas—our city's Patron. Such association is not justified by the facts, and our good Saint—notwithstanding his notable charity and humility—most reasonably might take exception to it. In truth, Stuyvesant had little in common with any respectable saint in the calendar; and to come upon the real man—as he is revealed in the official records of his time—is to experience the shock of painful discovery.

The Remonstrance of the year 1649, already cited, while dealing generally with the manifold misfortunes brought upon the colonists by bad government,

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deals particularly with the misdoings of the last Director: who then had been in office for only two years and a half, and who in that time had succeeded in setting the whole colony by the ears. "His first arrival," declared the remonstrants, "was peacock-like, with great state and pomposity"; and the burden of their complaint, constantly recurred to, is of his brutally dictatorial methods and of his coarsely arrogant pride. "His manner in court," they declare, "has been . . . to browbeat, dispute with, and harass one of the two parties; not as be seemeth a judge, but like a zealous advocate. This has caused great discontent everywhere, and has gone so far and had such an effect on some that many dare not bring any suits before the court if they do not stand well, or passably so, with the Director; for whom he op-

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poseth hath both sun and moon against him. . . . He likewise frequently submits his opinion in writing . . . and then his word is: ‘Gentlemen, this is my opinion, if any one have ought to object to it, let him express it.’ If any one then, on the instant, offer objection . . . his Honour bursts forth, incontinently, into a rage and makes such a to do that it is dreadful; yea, he frequently abuses the Councillors as this and as that, in foul language better befitting the fish-market than the Council board; and if all this be tolerated, he will not be satisfied until he have his way.” In regard to the right of appeal to the home government, his declaration is cited that “People may think of appealing during my time—should any one do so, I would have him made a foot shorter, pack the pieces off to Holland, and let him appeal

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in that way." And to this the remonstrants added by way of comment: "Oh cruel words! What more could a sovereign do?"

As the tone of the complainings shows, there was another side to all this. According to his lights (which were few) and within his limitations (which were many) Stuyvesant was in the way of being a reformer: and reformers ever have been painted blackest by those whom they sought to reform. That outrageous little colony needed a deal of reforming when he took over its government; and had his mandatory proclamations stopped with the one that forbade "sabbath breaking, brawling, and drunkenness," he still would have had a hornets' nest about his ears. Fancy what would have been the consensus of opinion on the part of the leading citizens of Fort Leavenworth

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had any reforming person fired off at them a proclamation of that sort in the old days of the Santa Fé Trail! But Stuyvesant's reforms cut deeper. Not content with trying to reduce to decency the energetic social customs of the colonists, he tried also to bring them up to the line of honest dealing: and so struck at their pockets as well as at their hearts. He forbade the sale of liquor to the savages: a most profitable business in itself, and of much indirect advantage to those engaged in it — because an intoxicated savage obviously was more desirable than a sober savage to bargain with for furs. He made stringent regulations which checked the profitable industry of smuggling peltries into New England, and European goods thence into New Netherland. He issued revolutionary commands that the frowsy

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and draggle-tailed little town should be set in order and cleansed. And on top of all this, farther to replenish the exhausted treasury of the colony, he levied a tax upon liquors and wines. That was the climax of his offending. As the outraged and indignant colonists themselves declared—becomingly falling back upon holy writ for a strong enough simile—the wine and liquor tax was “like the crowning of Rehoboam!”

It is not surprising that such a community should be at odds with such a ruler. Nearly half a century later, when New Amsterdam had become New York, a like resentful commotion was stirred up by another and a far better reform governor, Lord Bellomont: who was sent out from England to put down, and who did put down, the pirates and smugglers then flourishing in this town. But

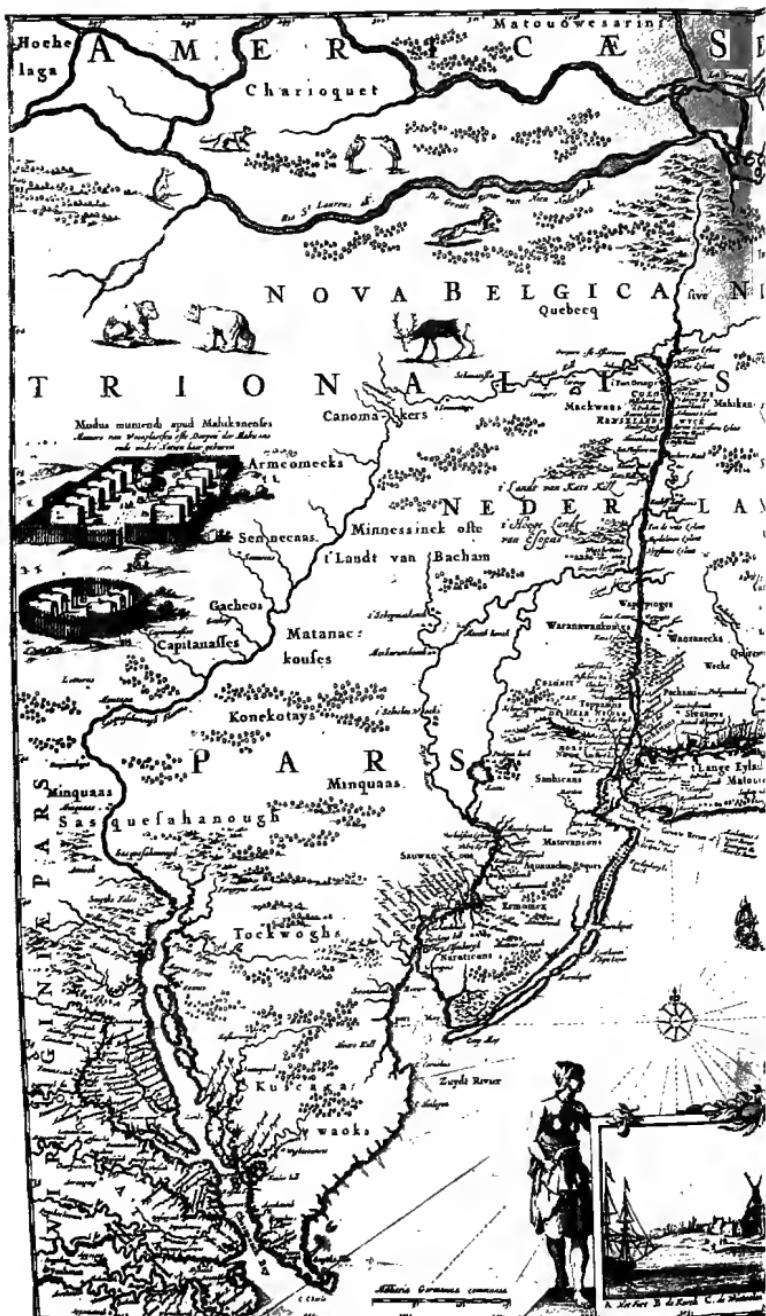
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Lord Bellomont was a strong man and a just man—who carried through his reforms to a masterly finish precisely because his sense of justice restrained him from making an arbitrary use of his strength. Stuyvesant was neither strong nor just, and he was arbitrary to the last degree. Considering the material that he had to work on, and considering also the manners and customs of his times, his headstrong ways and his coarse speech admit of palliation. No doubt he gave those equally headstrong and equally foul-mouthed colonists pretty much what, in one way, they deserved. But provocation is not justification. The capital error of his government was not its harshness but its arbitrary harshness. He seems to have been a waspish little man, with a testy temper that ever disposed him to fly into a rage with any-

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body who in the smallest particular contradicted him; and, assuredly, he lacked the sagacity that might have saved him from letting fly his choleric outbursts with an indiscriminating violence that destroyed the moral effect of what very often, no doubt, was his righteous wrath.

Under such a government as Stuyvesant gave to that unfortunate colony there could be no real improvement in its affairs. Even when his attempted reforms were sound—and for the most part they were sound—the effect of them was weakened, and their realization was made difficult or impossible, by the manner in which they were applied.



THE VISSCHER MAP, WITH A VIEW OF NEW



AMSTERDAM DRAWN BEFORE THE YEAR 1653

XII

BUT a better man than Stuyvesant—while he might have lost it with more dignity—could not have saved to Holland the colony of New Netherland. Forces from within and forces from without were working for its destruction. Internally, its affairs were administered with incompetence tempered with injustice—and it owed its bad government to the fact that it was but a by-venture in a great scheme of combined money-making and statecraft; and to the farther fact that it was more and more neglected, or remembered only to be more tightly squeezed, as the ruinous end of the West India Company drew near. Externally,

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the English constantly were pressing more closely upon its borders: strong in their determination to have the whole of it; and in the mean time taking possession of such scraps of it—as the eastern end of Long Island—as dropped loose of their own accord. Such conditions led inevitably to the loss of that which never had been well held.

The evil star of the West India Company was the most conspicuous among the several stars in their courses which fought against the Dutch in their struggle to hold fast to their American colonies. The condition of the Company never was sound financially. By heroic marauding it did acquire a vast sum of money—which went as quickly as it came. But the Company absolutely failed to build up in any part of its dominions a substantial legitimate trade from which it

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could draw securely a stable revenue. Its nearest approach to founding a well-ordered colony was in the Brazils, under the one competent governor that it ever sent out from Holland: Count John Maurice of Nassau. Under the wise rule of that excellent ruler a liberal scheme of trade regulations was established; religious toleration was assured; and for all classes alike there was just enforcement of, and equal protection under, a just code of laws. But, to quote Dr. Asher, "even Count John Maurice's brilliant talents yielded no pecuniary profits. Compelled by the strict and reiterated orders of the Directors of the Company, he had to carry on an incessant war with the Portuguese in southern Brazil. Great part of his revenue consisted of booty; and his troops ruined more than they took away—drawing upon the Dutch possessions similar

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acts of retribution from the enraged enemy. Among those horrors of border warfare agriculture and trade could not survive." If such a state of affairs obtained in the best managed of the Company's colonies, and at a time when the Company was in a flourishing condition, we need not be surprised that the state of affairs in its worst managed colony—our own New Netherland—became almost unendurable as the Company drew nearer and nearer to collapse.

From the year 1630 onward the Company's finances showed, as Dr. Asher puts it, "a terribly constant downward tendency." Only a year after it had paid its famous dividend upon its treasure-ship winnings, and out of its remaining surplus had lent 600,000 guilders to the Dutch government, it was unable to meet its running expenses. Under its charter

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it was entitled to a subsidy; but the government—partly because of lack of funds, but more because of the adverse action taken by the dominant political ring—was slack in making the promised payments and the subsidy fell badly into arrear. Money from other sources was not forthcoming. No colonial trade of importance had been developed; and the plan for breaking Spain's line of communication with her colonial treasure-houses had been executed so effectively that it had reacted upon its projectors after the manner of a boomerang; that is to say, although the Company had to carry the load of an armed fleet created mainly to bag Spanish plate-ships, the seas were empty of plate-ships to be bagged.

Bad luck had something to do with the Company's misfortunes, but at the

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root of them was bad management. The same stupidity, or worse, that was shown in the conduct of the affairs of our own little New Netherland was shown on a larger scale in the conduct of the far more important affairs in Brazil. At the end of a long series of quarrels with the Council, Count John Maurice resigned his commission in disgust in the year 1644. His successors, for the most part, were incompetents. When they happened to possess wits they used them in betraying the Company's interests—for a consideration—to the Portuguese. It took just ten years of that sort of thing to bring matters to their logical climax. In the year 1654 the Company's troops evacuated the Brazils.

Ten years more brought the end of everything. Dr. Asher puts the record of those ten calamitous years into a few

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words. "We cannot here attempt," he writes, "to describe the Company's last agony: its vain attempts to combine with the East India Company; its painful efforts to obtain from the government either armed assistance or payment of its arrears. The symptoms of bankruptcy became saddening and more threatening from year to year. At last its creditors began to seize the Company's property. The death blow was struck in 1664—when New Netherland, the Company's last valuable possession, was conquered by the English." And so that rather grandly conceived, but consistently ill executed enterprise, came to a miserable end. As a warning, the history of its few triumphs and of its many failures has a permanent value. And especially does its history point the moral that it is unwise, to say the least, to try to get

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from invested patriotism a dividend in cash.

Conceivably, by the exercise of a small amount of common sense, the Dutch might have retained their holdings in Brazil; but from their holdings in North America — New Netherland, and the colony on the Delaware—the common sense of all the ages could not have saved them from being squeezed out. There they were at grips with a race stronger than their own in numbers, and not less strong in sheer grit. For thirty years before the end came, the English were pressing in upon their territory from the east and from the south; while across seas, with a large statesmanship, the English government was taking a hand in putting on the screws.

The most effective twist of the English screw was the passage by the Common-

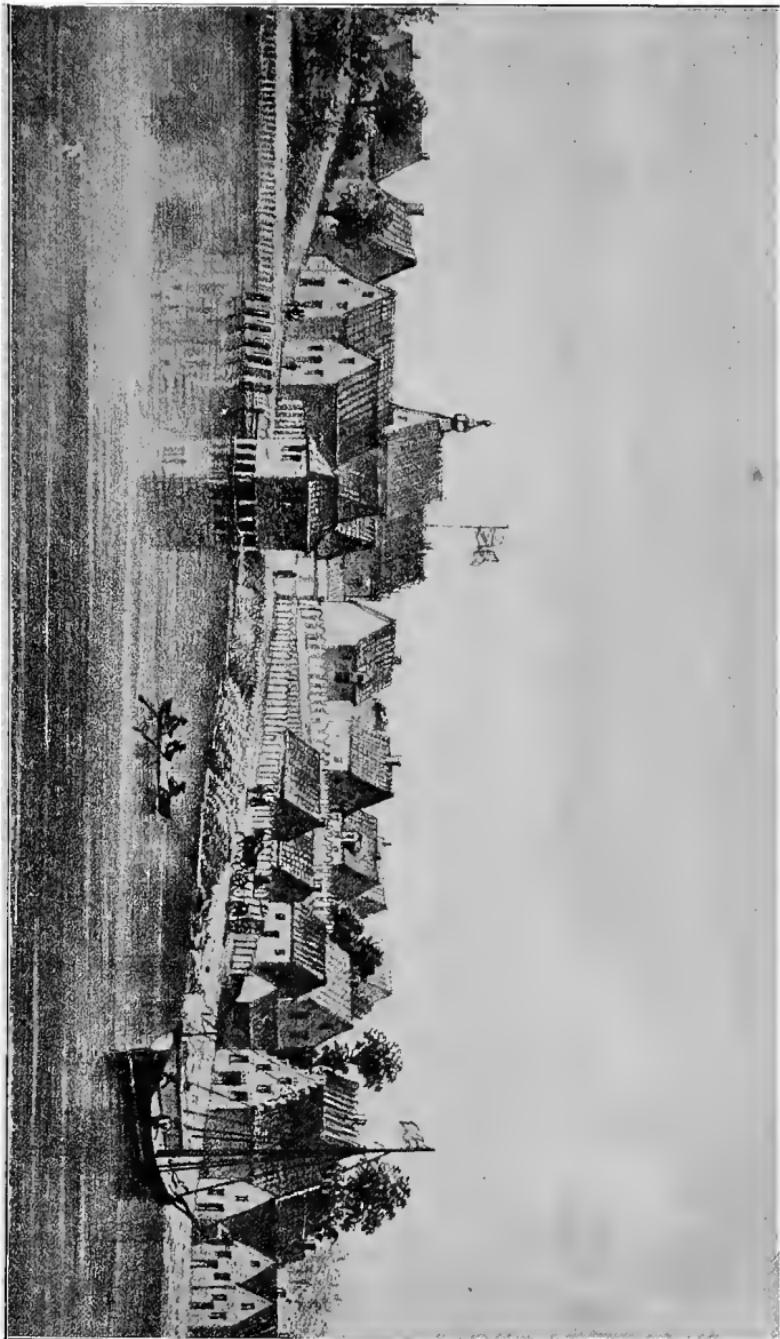
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wealth Parliament (October 9, 1651) of the Navigation Act: which decreed that goods imported into England must come in English ships or in ships belonging to the country in which the goods were produced. As the Dutch at that time had the carrying trade of the world pretty well in their hands, the English law was in the nature of some of our own highly impersonal legislation affecting "cities of the first class." No names were mentioned—but it hit where it was meant to hit, and it hit hard. A loud buzzing of ambassadors followed that shot at Dutch commerce. But the propositions made by Holland—that there should be free trade to the West Indies and to Virginia, and that "a just, certain, and immovable boundary line" should be fixed between the English and the Dutch territories in America—came to nothing; and so, pres-

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ently, there was the louder buzzing of guns. In the handsome little war that followed (1652-54), the English — while practically gaining what they fought for — experienced the unusual sensation of being soundly whipped at sea. Blake fairly was driven to take shelter in the Thames: after which Tromp went sailing up and down the Channel with that aggravating broom at his mast-head, to which reference is inexpedient in talking with the average Englishman even now.

Here in Manhattan there was a great show of bellicosity while that waspish little war went on. It was then — under orders from Holland to put the town in a state of defence — that our famous wall was built along the line of what now is Wall Street. Thomas Baxter (who proved himself to be a very bad lot, a little later) had the contract for supplying the pali-



THE WATER GATE, FOOT OF WALL STREET, 1679

(Redrawn from the Dankers and Slyter drawing. See *Memoirs of the Long Island Historical Society*, vol. i.)

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sadoes which were intended to stand off his own countrymen; but which, in point of fact, never stood off anything more dangerously aggressive than wandering cows. Also, the city watch was strengthened; and preparations for a naval demonstration (in the event of a hostile fleet appearing before the city) were made by ordering Schipper Visscher "to keep his sails always ready, and to have his gun loaded day and night." In a word, we all were full of fight in that strenuous time—but, mercifully, carnage was averted. It takes two armies to make a battle: and the English army, for which we were waiting in so blood-thirsty a mood, discreetly remained at a safe distance from our pugnacious little fume of a town.

XIII

STUYVESANT showed both manliness and good common sense in dealing with the most threatening feature of that really volcanic situation: the charge made by the New-Englanders that he had endeavored to stir up against them an Indian revolt. He met the charge promptly by inviting the Commissioners* to send delegates to New Amsterdam to investigate it—and when they came he refuted it. More than that, he submitted

* The colonies of New Plymouth, Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Haven became confederated, May 19, 1643, as "The United Colonies of New England." The administration of the affairs of the confederacy was intrusted to a board consisting of two commissioners from each colony.

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to the delegates very reasonable and just propositions for the regulation of inter-colonial affairs. In substance, those propositions were: I. Neighborly friendship, without regard to the hostilities in Europe; II. Continuance of trade as before; III. Mutual justice against fraudulent debtors; IV. A defensive and offensive alliance against common enemies. But the delegates refused to entertain his propositions, and went back to Boston in an unexplained but quite unmistakable huff. Very likely they had an instinctive feeling that treaties were unnecessary—since, without treaties, things were coming their way.

Moreover, the desire of the New-Englanders to fight the Dutch was strong. Patriotism may have been at the root of that desire, but its more obvious motive was a mere commonplace human longing

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to lay hands on valuable Dutch property. Rhode Island—in those years, and for many succeeding years, the abode of notoriously hard characters—even made a start at a little war of spoliation on its own account. Two loose fish of thievish proclivities, Dyer and Underhill, were granted a license by that disreputable colony (June 3, 1653) to “take all Dutch ships and vessels as shall come into their power”; and the energetic Thomas Baxter—fresh from his palisading operation in Wall Street, and very likely using the profits of that operation in fitting out his expedition—also got a predatory license from Rhode Island (“turned pirate,” is the way that Mr. Brodhead puts it) and made a spirited looting cruise along the Sound: that was ended by his being “run in” not by the Dutch but by the authorities of New Haven.

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Only the action of Massachusetts at that juncture averted what would have been a most horrid little war between the Dutch and the English colonies; and, as it was, the war was escaped by a very close shave. The delegates, being come again to Boston, presented their report of the evidence that had been laid before them, in New Amsterdam and elsewhere, for and against the alleged Dutch plot to excite an Indian rising; and the matter was referred to a conference of "divers neighbouring elders," held before the General Court of Massachusetts, with instructions to find out "what the Lord calleth to do." The elders found proofs enough to "induce them to believe" in the reality of "that late execrable plot, tending to the destruction of so many dear saints of God, which is imputed to the Dutch governor and fiscal"; but they

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did not find the proofs "so fully conclusive as to clear up present proceedings to war." Thereupon the General Court voted that they were not "called to make a present war with the Dutch."

That mild decision was not well received. Voicing the popular feeling—and with the bellicose tendencies of his cloth—the "teacher of the church at Salem" wrote to urge immediate hostilities: the postponement of which, he declared, already "had caused many a pensive heart." Six out of the eight Commissioners were at one with this kindly gentleman in his desire for vicarious blood-letting. Solidly they cast their votes for instant war. Fortunately, the members of the General Court of Massachusetts kept their heads. Resting their opinion upon the terms of the colonial Articles of Confederation, they

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declared that it was beyond the powers of "six commissioners of the other colonies to put forth any act of power in a vindictive war, whereby they shall command the colonies dissenting to assist them in the same." That declaration—which virtually was a declaration, nearly two centuries in advance of its recognized existence, of the doctrine of State Rights—saved the day. The Commissioners sent to Stuyvesant "a peevish reply": telling him that his "confident denials of the barbarous plot charged will weigh little in the balance against such evidence" as that which they had secured; and adding the broad and vague threat that "we must still require and seek due satisfaction and security." But their vaporizing led to nothing, and the war did not come off. Massachusetts spoke the final word—in reply to a request

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from Connecticut that "by war, if no other means will serve, the Dutch at and about the Manhatoes, who have been and still are like to prove injurious and dangerous neighbours, may be removed." To that intemperate request the temperate answer was given that Massachusetts refused to act "in so weighty a concernment as to send forth men to shed blood" unless satisfied "that God calls for it; and then it must be clear and not doubtful, necessary and expedient."

That persistent stand for peace was due in part, no doubt, to the fact that between Massachusetts and New Netherland there was no such sharp conflict of interests as there was between New Netherland and the nearer-lying English colonies; that, on the contrary, there was even a certain friendliness between the two because of the trade that went on, to

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their common advantage, between Boston and New Amsterdam. But I think that what really prevented the war was Stuyvesant's promptness and frankness in dealing with the charge that he had sought to stir up an Indian revolt. The clearness of his defence, and his straightforward way of making it, constituted an appeal to the sense of right which then and always was characteristic of the Massachusetts colonists; and that appeal, I am persuaded, counted for more with them than did the feeling of friendliness begotten of common interests in trade.

The fact is to be noted that Stuyvesant uniformly showed in what may be termed his foreign policy a far greater wisdom than he usually showed in his domestic policy. His one important aggressive act —his reduction (1655) of the Swedish colony on the Delaware, in dealing with

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which Irving has quite outdone himself in a farrago of mingled nonsense and falsehood—was admirably planned and most successfully executed. He gained his end, without any fighting whatever, by the menacing display of an effective superior force: a method, it will be observed, that accords precisely with the rules laid down by the highest modern authorities on the art of war. It is true that in the Treaty of Hartford (1650) he yielded too much to the English; but his concessions materially lessened the dangerous border troubles, and the treaty certainly was beneficial for a time. His dealings with Virginia were to still better purpose. Even while the war between Holland and England was in progress—in accordance with his desire, scouted by the New-Englanders, for “neighbourly friendship, without regard to the hostil-

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ties in Europe"—he made two attempts to conclude a commercial treaty with the Virginia authorities; and he succeeded in effecting with them a favorable working arrangement in the year 1653 that led on to the more formal and equally favorable convention of the year 1660.

The Virginia trade began to be of importance in the year 1652, when the export tax on tobacco shipped from New Netherland was removed; a concession on the part of the Amsterdam Chamber with which were united a reduction of the price of passage from Holland outward, and permission—here was the beginning of our slave trade—for the colonists to import negroes from Africa. A hint of trade direct with the Spanish colonies is found, also, in a list of charges brought (1653) by the West India Company against the proprietors of Rensselaer-

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wyck; one of those charges being that "licenses have been granted to private individuals to sail to the coast of Florida."

I should like to follow up that interesting lead, but there is little to go upon in the indiscreetly reticent records of the time. One other important trace of it I have found: in a letter (February 13, 1659) from the Amsterdam Chamber to the Director General and Council in New Netherland granting "a larger liberty to the inhabitants there to trade . . . to France, Spain, Italy, the Caribbee islands, and other parts, to dispose of and sell their freighted products, salted fish, wares and merchandise"; subject to the restriction that they "shall be obliged and bound to return direct either here before this city of Amsterdam or back to New Netherland to the place of your Honours' abode, in order to pay to your Honours,

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on the discharge and sale thereof, such duties as the Company here derives from them." Bearing on this matter, but a little beside it, is a minute (July 10, 1655) of the States General touching a memorial presented by the Spanish ambassador requesting that one "Sebastien Raef, a Captain or privateer committing piracies in the West Indies on the subjects of the Most Illustrious King" should be arrested in Amsterdam; and "that the government of New Netherland be instructed to arrest in their harbours Joan van Kampen, his lieutenant, together with his ship and effects, that law and justice be administered to the one and the other, for the behoof of the interested, with infliction of exemplary punishment for the piracies they have committed." From which we may infer that somewhat liberal notions obtained in New Netherland as

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to the scope of commercial relations with the colonies of Spain.

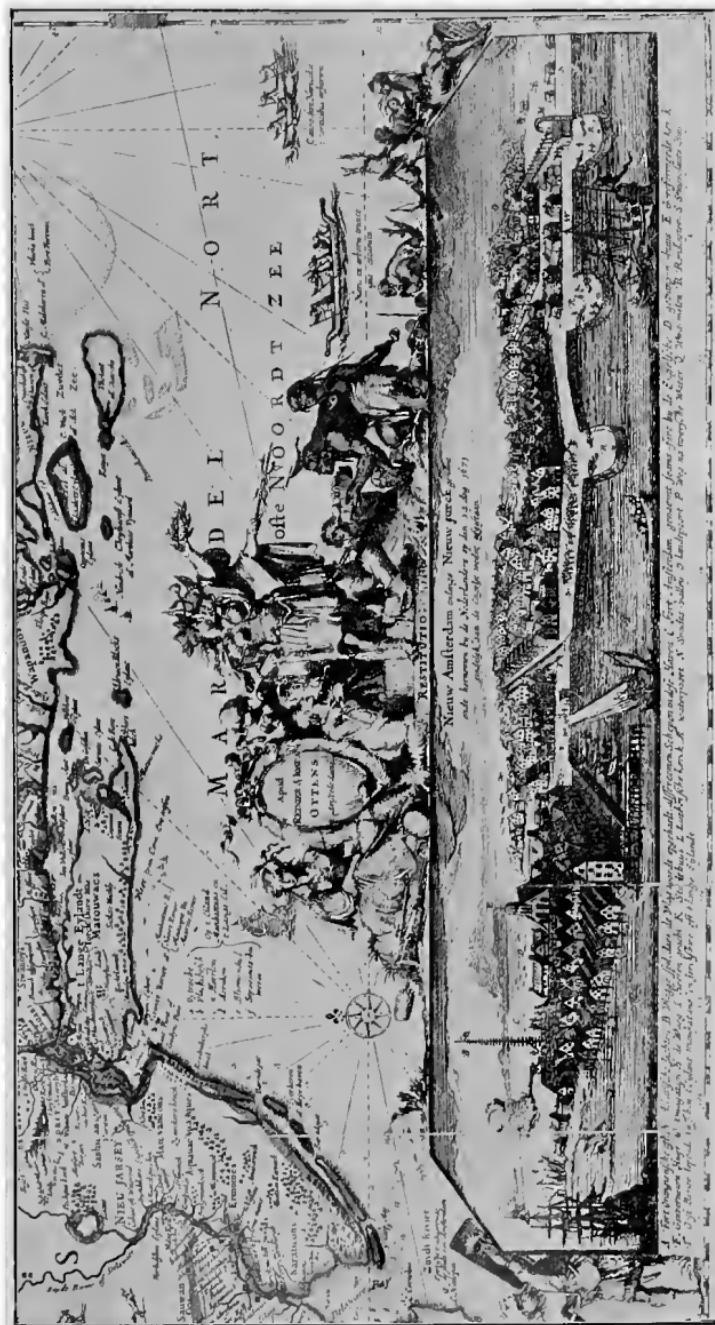
Putting incidental piracies out of the question, Stuyvesant certainly endeavored—according to his lights—to foster the foreign trade of New Netherland. His voyage to the West Indies in the year 1655 was made expressly to that end; and his consistent effort seems to have been to make New Amsterdam a little metropolis in which should centre the American colonial trade. Possibly I am going too far in crediting him with the deliberate formulation and pursuit of a policy in which was such large statesmanship; but it is, at least, an interesting and a suggestive fact that most of his plans touching the exterior affairs of the colony do wear the look of having been conceived in the spirit of one who had that great end in view.

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Unfortunately, Stuyvesant did not show in dealing with home matters the excellent qualities which he showed in dealing with intercolonial matters. Had he done so his record would have been a very different one, and his governorship—while ending in the always inevitable loss of his province—would have ended without disgrace. The shame of the taking of New Netherland by the English was not that it was conquered; it was that its people—in their eagerness to escape from a government that had become intolerable—almost welcomed their conquerors. But only the more because of his bad domestic policy does the last Director need the praise, that assuredly is due to him, for his good foreign policy; and most of all does he deserve praise for his share—a good half of the credit belongs to Massachusetts—in so handling

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the matters at issue with the New England colonies as to avert a war in which the meanest sordid motives would have found vent in a truly horrible way. I suppose that there can be nothing more despairingly cruel than a fight to the death, having greed for its motive, between two castaways on a desert island in a lonely sea: and it would have been much that sort of a fight between the handful of English and the handful of Dutch, then living remote and isolated in the American wilderness, had they come to blows.



THE ALLAERTD VIEW OF NEW YORK. CIRCA 1668
(From the map of Reinier and Josua Ottens)

XIV

IN the thick of that troublous time, while Holland and England were at open war and while the threat of war hung over their dependent colonies, the long-cherished desire of New Amsterdam to become a city was realized. As a matter of course, it was not realized in a satisfactory way—nothing was satisfactory to anybody, to state the case broadly, in which the West India Company had a hand; but, at least, on February 2, 1653, the civic government was established which, in one form or another, has been maintained on this island until this present day.

By the terms of the grant, from the

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Amsterdam Chamber, the municipal organization of New Amsterdam was to resemble "as much as possible" that of the parent city in Holland; but, as the matter worked out in practice, the possibilities proved to be so limited that the resemblance was in the nature of a caricature. Stuyvesant set up and maintained his right to appoint the members of the city government — the burgomasters, schepens, secretary, and schout —with the natural result that his authority continued to be paramount in civic matters; and in general he contrived to make the new order of things very much the same as the old order so far as any real increase of liberties was concerned. In a word, as Mr. Brodhead puts it: "The ungraceful concessions of the grudging Chamber were hampered by the most illiberal interpretation which

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their provincial representative could devise." For Mr. Brodhead — whose disposition toward the Director uniformly is kindly — those are very strong words. But they are amply justified by the facts.

With a modernity of method that our citizens of that period resented more keenly (being unaccustomed to it) than we resent it now, Stuyvesant made out his "slate"; and then—with a directness that a Tammany leader would weep over in envy—put in his men by the simple process of issuing a proclamation in which they were assigned to their several offices. Save in our spasmodic lucid intervals of civic reform, we still get by ways only a trifle more roundabout to just the same practical results—and philologists, with these early facts available for their study, will perceive with pleasure the nice linguistic propriety that there is in our

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present use of the Dutch word “boss.” On the very instant that this city became a city the political meaning of that word, in effect, was established and defined.

Some of the men named on Stuyvesant’s “slate,” as is the custom nowadays, were respectable citizens. More of them, still in accordance with modern custom, were not. And—fitting to a hair with Tammany methods—the most important office was given to the worst of them all. For Schout—an official who, in addition to presiding over the Board of Burgomasters and Schepens, performed duties which in a way combined those of our modern sheriff and district attorney—Stuyvesant appointed Cornelis van Tienhoven, the Company’s Fiscal: and had he searched through the whole colony he probably could not have found a

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man more outrageously unfit for any office at all.

In the summary, prepared by order of the States General, of the Remonstrance of 1649, Van Tienhoven is thus pleasingly described: "He is subtle, crafty, intelligent, sharp witted for evil; one of the oldest inhabitants in the country; is conversant with all the circumstances both of Christians and Indians, hath even associated with the savages through lechery; he is a dissembler, double-faced, a cheat; the whole country proclaims him a knave, a murderer, a traitor, inasmuch as he by false reports originated the war [the Indian war of 1643]. He holds the office of Secretary, wherein he perpetrates all conceivable sorts of blunders, now against one, now against another, even against his own employers; he fleeces the people."

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To this arraignment may be added the testimony of Hendrick van Dyck, given a year earlier (1652) when he was superseded in his office of Fiscal by—to use his own kindly words—"the perjured, godless Cornelis Tienhoven." Van Dyck uplifted his testimony in these terms: "Were an honorable gentleman put in my place, the false accusations which the Director [Stuyvesant] made and sent over against me long ago might have some semblance of truth; but his perjured secretary, Cornelis van Tienhoven, who returned hither contrary to the prohibition of their High Mightinesses; who is known, and can be proved to all the world, to be a * * * and perjurer; who is a disgrace to, and the sole affliction of, Christians and heathens in this country, and whom the Director always hath managed to shield—this is the person whom

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the Director hath of his own authority appointed Fiscal!" It is only just to add that Van Dyck's genial deliverance was made against a man who had ousted him from a lucrative office and also, as is apparent, while he himself was under fire. Obviously, he had his little prejudices, and he certainly did not hesitate to express them with an engaging frankness. But the fact remains that everything in his statement is borne out by the records—excepting, perhaps, the assertion that Van Tienhoven was "the sole affliction of Christians and heathens." That is too exclusive. The Christians and heathens resident in New Amsterdam were variously and very generally afflicted in those unhappy days.

Touching the affair of Van Tienhoven and poor Lysbet van Hoogvelt, "the daughter of the basket-maker in Amster-

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dam," the dry and formal records of two centuries and a half ago suddenly cease to be dry and formal and become warmly alive. It is inexpedient to quote in full the several long depositions taken in Holland in the matter, and it also is needless: a few extracts from those ancient documents will suffice to make the case clear. Louisa Noë, "who speaks by her woman's troth, instead of oath," testified that there came to her "to engage lodgings for himself and a young lady . . . a certain corpulent and thickset person, of red and bloated visage and light hair, who she afterward understood was called Van Tienhoven." Margaretta van Eeda, "tavern-keeper in old Haerlem at the Sluice," bearing witness "upon her veracity and conscience, instead of upon oath," testified—in more kindly terms as to my gentleman's personal appear-

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ance—that “over a year ago there came to lodge at her house a likely person of ruddy face, corpulent body, and having a little wen on the side of his cheek, who she afterward understood was from New Netherland, having with him a woman toward whom he evinced great friendship and love, calling her always ‘Dearest,’ and conversing with her as man and wife are wont to do.” Elizabeth Janns, inn-keeper, of The Arms of Haerlem, testified that “a person named Mr. Cornelis van Tienhoven came divers times to the house of the deponent, keeping open tavern . . . with Lysbet Janssen Croon van Hoogvelt . . . and have there at different times, now and then, eaten fish and showed and manifested toward each other great love and friendship, such as is the custom among sweethearts.” And the end of the story is told in a letter

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written here in Manhattan by Augustin Heermans, September 20, 1651: "The basket-maker's daughter, whom Van Tienhoven brought from Holland on a promise of marriage, coming here and finding he was already married, hath exposed his conduct even in the public court." That exposure, as is evident, did him no harm. Less than a year later Stuyvesant appointed him Fiscal, and less than two years later appointed him Schout—and so made him the chief officer of the then new-born city that now is New York.

I have dwelt at length upon Van Tienhoven's personal record, and I have revived this ancient scandal in which poor Lysbet had so cruel a part (and, too, after they had "eaten fish and showed and manifested toward each other great love and friendship"!) because such de-

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tailed statement is necessary to support convincingly my general assertions touching the immorals of the inhabitants and of the rulers of this unfortunate town. There was, indeed, a popular outcry against Van Tienhoven's appointment; but it seems to have been based mainly on the ground that he was unfit to be Schout because he still continued to be an officer, the Fiscal, of the Company—not on the broader and very tenable ground that he was an unfit person to hold any public office at all. And, also, the outcry came in part—as in the case of the shady Van Dyck, who had been “turned down” in Van Tienhoven's favor—from citizens whose right to object to anybody on the score of immorals was of a highly attenuated sort. In the end, to be sure, he was turned out of his office in disgrace by order of the West India Company; and

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Stuyvesant was forbidden again to employ him—or to employ his brother, Adriaen, who had been detected in fraud as receiver general—in the public service. But that order was a lashing of Stuyvesant over Van Tienhoven's shoulders, and it was not issued until Van Tienhoven had been Schout of the city for three years. Even Tammany has not beaten this record in civic immorality which our city scored at its very start.

XV

ON December 10, 1653, "the most important popular convention that had ever been assembled in New Netherland," to quote Mr. Brodhead's words, met in the Stadt Huys of New Amsterdam. That convention — being a gathering of representatives of the capital city, of the near-by Dutch towns, and of the English towns on Long Island — was in the way of being an impotent parliament: that came together not as a governing and law-making body but to remonstrate against the existing government, and against the tangle of inequitable laws (still farther complicated by arbitrary edicts) in which the colonists were involved.

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What gave that queer little parliament its chief significance was the presence, for the first time in Dutch councils, of English delegates; and the fact that those delegates came to the council rightfully, as representatives of their fellow-countrymen legally subject to the government of New Netherland, did not make them any the less representatives of the race that was crowding out the Dutch from their holding in the new world.

It was at the instance of the English, indeed, that the council was convened. Long Island had been filling up steadily with English settlers, and those settlers took even less kindly than did the Dutch to the eccentricities and the inefficiencies of the government under which they lived. Especially did they resent the failure of that government to protect them against the many little freebooters

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— of the Thomas Baxter stripe — who committed highly annoying robberies along the borders of the Sound; and against the many stray savages who, as occasion offered, engaged in little ravagings and murderings of a distasteful sort. Also, they had the characteristic English longing to be let alone in the management of their local affairs. Out of which conditions arose among them the not unreasonable desire either to be taken care of, or to be given a free hand in taking care of themselves.

In order to talk matters over with the Dutch authorities, representatives came up from Gravesend and Flushing and Newtown; and a conference was held in the Stadt Huys (November 26, 1653) to consider what could be done "for the welfare of the country and its inhabitants," and "to determine on some wise

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and salutary measures" which should bring up the Sound pirates with a round turn. The Dutch representatives who met them—members of the city government and of the Provincial Council—seeing their way to grinding some axes of their own, recommended that a general statement of grievances should be embodied, as usual, in a "remonstance"; and that with the remonstrance, also as usual, should be coupled a prayer for relief. That method of procedure being agreed to, an adjournment of a fortnight was decided upon: to the end that the views of the colonists of Long Island and of Staten Island might be obtained more fully, and that a larger number of delegates might be got together; in effect, that the informal meeting might be raised to the dignity of a little Landtag. Stuyvesant had no relish for such doings. The

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action of the English, he declared, "smelt of rebellion" and of "contempt of his high authority and commission." But the popular will was too strong for him—or he was too weak to control it, which amounted to the same thing—and he "very reluctantly sanctioned the meeting that he could not prevent." Accordingly, on December 10th, with an augmented membership, the council was reconvened. Four Dutch towns and four English towns were represented, and the delegates—apparently chosen on a basis of numerical representation—were ten of Dutch and nine of English nativity. And all of them, without regard to nationality, harmoniously were agreed to pool their grievances and to go for Director Stuyvesant horns down!

Considering how serious those grievances were, the Remonstrance which

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they formulated was couched in extraordinarily temperate terms. That document was drawn by one of the representatives from Gravesend, Ensign George Baxter—who is not to be confounded with the piratical Thomas—and as the work of an Englishman it is all the more remarkable for its tone of loyalty to the government of Holland. The preamble runs in these words: “Composed of various nations from different parts of the world, leaving at our own expense our country and countrymen, we voluntarily came under the protection of our sovereign High and Mighty Lords the States General, whom we acknowledge as our lieges; and being made members of one body, subjected ourselves, as in duty bound, to the general laws of the United Provinces, and all other new orders and ordinances which by virtue of the afore-

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said authority may be published, agreeably to the customs freedoms grants and privileges of the Netherlands."

What the remonstrants did object to, and pointedly, was the publication of new orders and ordinances which distinctly were disagreeable to the customs, and still more disagreeable to the freedoms, of the home country. The first and the main charge of their remonstrance was that such orders and ordinances had been enacted by the Director and Council "without the knowledge or consent of the people," and that the same were "contrary to the granted privileges of the Netherland government, and odious to every free born man, and especially so to those whom God has placed under a free state in newly settled lands, who are entitled to claim laws not transcending, but resembling as

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nearly as possible, those of the Netherlands."

Joined with this remonstrance in chief—which, in effect, was no more than an assertion of the fact that the colonists were denied common right and common justice—minor remonstrance was made against the failure of the provincial government to protect persons and property; against the obligation to obey “old orders and proclamations of the Director and Council, made without the knowledge or consent of the people,” which “subject them to loss and punishment through ignorance”; against the “wrongful and suspicious delay” in confirming land patents; against land grants to favored individuals “to the great injury of the Province”; and against the appointment of officers and magistrates “without the consent or nomination of the people

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. . . contrary to the laws of the Netherlands." In conclusion, the authors of that surprisingly modest appeal added: "As we have, for easier reference, reduced all our grievances to six heads, we renew our allegiance, in the hope that satisfaction will be granted to the country according to established justice, and all dissensions be settled and allayed."

There is a very marked difference between the verbose and mean complainings of the more famous Remonstrance of the year 1649 and the simple directness and dignity of this demand for obvious rights; and had there been any "established justice" for New Netherland — either in the provincial government or in the home government — it could not have been met, as it was met, by a flat refusal all around. Stuyvesant made answer to it by a general denial,

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that included a particular denial of the right of the delegates to assemble; and when the delegates replied, in turn, by an appeal to that natural law "which permits all men to assemble for the protection of their liberties and their property," he tersely ordered them to disperse "on pain of our highest displeasure"; to which lordly mandate, by way of a cracker, he added: "We derive our authority from God and the Company, not from a few ignorant subjects; and we alone can call the inhabitants together." In Holland, when the Remonstrance got there, the answer was the same. The Directors of the Company wrote to Stuyvesant (May 18, 1654) in these terms: "We are unable to discover in the whole Remonstrance one single point to justify complaint. . . . You ought to have acted with more vigor against the ringleaders

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of the gang. . . . It is our express command that you punish what has occurred as it deserves, so that others may be deterred in future from following such examples." And at the same time the Directors wrote to the Burgomasters and Schepens of New Amsterdam commanding "that you conduct yourselves quietly and peaceably, submit yourselves to the government placed over you, and in no wise allow yourselves to hold particular convention with the English or others in matters of form and deliberation on affairs of state, which do not appertain to you; and, what is yet worse, attempt an alteration in the state and its government."

The answer from Holland sustained one half of Stuyvesant's declaration that he derived his authority "from God and the Company"—so far as the Company went,

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his delegated authority was confirmed and sustained. But the other half of his declaration did not come out so well. A decade later his draft on divine power was returned dishonored; and only a turn of chance in his favor prevented that draft from going to protest within a year.

The twist of luck that saved him temporarily was the conclusion of peace (April, 1654) between England and Holland; and the consequent abandonment by Cromwell of his project for pacifying the colonial situation—in a breezily statesman-like fashion—by annexing New Netherland out of hand. Actually, the Protector's annexation scheme came to the very edge of being realized. An effective naval force was despatched from England; the New England colonies—Massachusetts alone lagging a little—buzzed with eager preparations for the

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fight that they so longed for; and the English colonists on Long Island, delightedly bustling to the front, made a fair start toward the impending revolution by declaring their independence of Dutch authority and by setting up a microscopic government of their own. And then, just as everybody (with the exception of Director Stuyvesant) was ready for things to happen, the peace was concluded—and nothing happened at all! But it was only by a very narrow margin that the orders for the seizure of New Netherland were countermanded before New Netherland was seized.

While the war was imminent New Amsterdam was in a whirl. Stuyvesant's mental attitude in the premises seems to have bordered upon consternation. In regard to practical provision for defence he wrote: "We have no gunners, no

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musketeers, no sailors, and scarcely sixteen hundred pounds of powder"—a statement that exhibits in rather a startling fashion the physical unpreparedness of the colony for a long-threatened war. On its moral side the situation was worse. The Director declared that he did not expect "the people residing in the country, not even the Dutch," to back him in the fight that was coming on; and added: "The English, although they have sworn allegiance, would take up arms and join the enemy . . . to invite them to aid us would be bringing the Trojan horse within our walls."

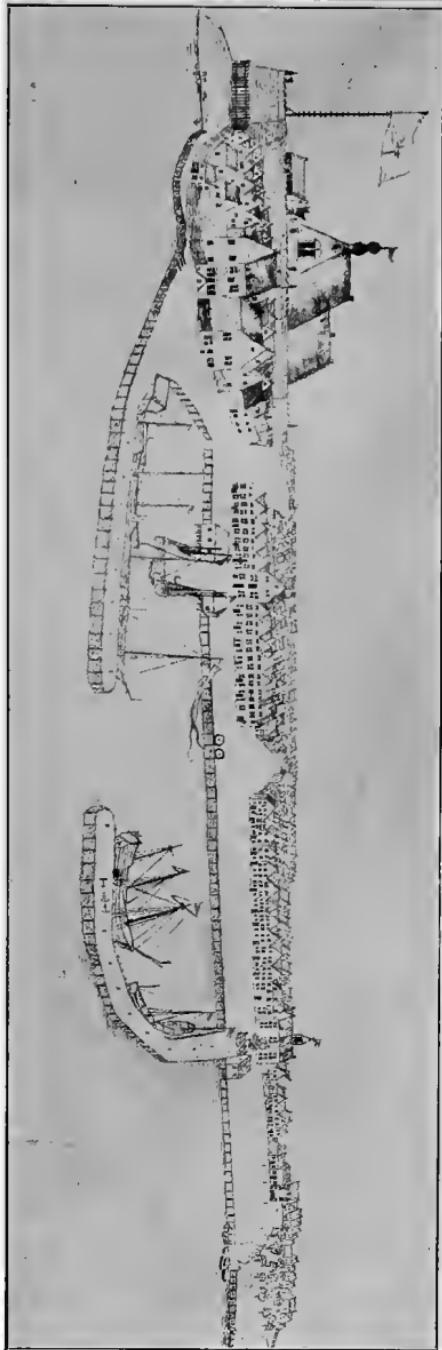
By the Director's own showing, therefore, it appears that the spirit of loyalty in the colony—if such a spirit can be said ever to have existed—practically was dead, and that the spirit of revolt was very much alive. His English subjects

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—almost openly in New Amsterdam, quite openly on Long Island—were impatient for the coming of their countrymen. His Dutch subjects were in a state of sulky mutiny that made them more than half ready to welcome the coming of anybody who would give them a new government of any sort—because of their moody conviction that any change whatever must give them a better government than that under which they lived. And it all was quite logical. It was the natural and inevitable outcome of thirty years of consistent misrule.

XVI -

FOR my present purposes it is needless to treat at all in detail the last ten years of the Dutch domination of New Netherland. Little concessions continued to be made to the colonists; large wrongs continued to oppress them; there were more "remonstrances"; there was an Indian war. Fresh turns produced fresh figures in that small kaleidoscope, but the constituent elements of the figures remained unchanged. The essential change came from the outside; and even that was but the continued, yet always increasing, pressure of those forces which had begun to operate (as I have already written) before the unstable foundation



VIEW OF NEW YORK FROM BROOKLYN HEIGHTS, 1679

(From the Dankers and Sluyter drawing)

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of the Dutch colony was laid. With the steadfast persistence of fate inevitable the English grip tightened as the English cordon closed in.

By the year 1659 the eastern end of Long Island—surrendered by Stuyvesant under the terms of the Treaty of Hartford (1650)—was a vigorous English colony; and was manifesting its vigor in a characteristic English fashion by crowding down into the Dutch territory westward of the Oyster Bay line. That thrust at close quarters was not easy to deal with. Releases of land were obtained in due form by Englishmen from accommodating sachems in temporary financial difficulties—or in chronic thirst that such transactions in real estate would provide means for temporarily slaking—and on the land thus obtained modest settlements were made. Present-

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ly, becoming immodest, the settlers of those settlements asserted that they were under the jurisdiction of Connecticut; an assertion that produced awkward conflicts of authority, no matter how hotly it was denied.

Up in the north, in the back-country, Massachusetts was reaching out to tap the Dutch fur-trade at its source: calmly ignoring the provisions of the Treaty of Hartford and claiming as her own all the territory between lines running westward from three miles south of the Charles and three miles north of the Merrimac straightaway across the continent to the Pacific. The southern line of that handsome claim of everything in sight down to sunset crossed the Hudson not far from Saugerties; and the kindly intention of the claimants was to relieve the Dutch of all care of the upper reaches of

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the river, and incidentally to divert from New Amsterdam to Boston the bulk of the trade in furs. In presenting the matter to Stuyvesant for consideration (September 17, 1659) the Commissioners shyly urged "we conceive the agreement at Hartford, that the English should not come within ten miles of Hudson's river, doth not prejudice the rights of the Massachusetts in the upland country, nor give any rights to the Dutch there"; upon the strength of which ingenious conception they asked that free passage from the sea into and through the river should be given to the English settlers—"they demeaning themselves peaceably, and paying such moderate duties as may be expected in such cases"—resident upon its upper banks. And by way of justifying their modest request the Commissioners drew an airy parallel in free

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international water-ways between the Hudson on the one hand and on the other the Elbe and the Rhine. It is to Stuyvesant's credit that his reply (October 29, 1659) to those cheeky Commissioners was a flat refusal; and that he immediately sent off to the Amsterdam Chamber—in order to be in a position to back his refusal practically—a demand for "a frigate of sixteen guns." That the frigate did not come was a mere administrative detail quite in the natural order of things.

By way of completing the English cordon, Lord Baltimore's people were pressing the Dutch from the south. The Dutch trading-post on the Delaware river—or the South river, as they called it—was a losing venture from first to last; and onward from the time (1638) of the planting of the Swedish colony on the

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west shore of the Delaware, on what nominally was Dutch territory, the government of New Netherland was involved in snarling difficulties in its efforts to maintain its rights. Before the Swedes were reduced to approximate order—even after their official conquest they continued to give trouble—the much more serious trouble with the English colonists of Maryland began.

Those complications were brought to a head by the formal demand (August 3, 1659) addressed by Governor Fendall, Lord Baltimore's representative, to "the pretended Governor of a people seated in Delaware Bay, within his Lordship's Province," to "depart forth of his Lordship's Province"—or to take the consequences! And Governor Fendall indicated what the consequences were likely to be by adding politely: "or otherwise

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I desire you to hold me excused if I use my utmost endeavour to reduce that part of his Lordship's Province unto its due obedience under him." The little ambassador who carried the Maryland governor's courteous but peremptory letter to the Dutch commandant on the Delaware delivered it in a "pretty harsh and bitter" manner; and emphasized its purport by remarking incidentally that, "as the tobacco is chiefly harvested," the people of Maryland were quite at leisure for a fight. "It now suits us," he concluded—in what no doubt was meant to be a persuasive spirit—"best in the whole year."

But the sporting offer of the Marylanders to fill in the close season for tobacco with a time-killing war did not materialize. Their ardor was a little cooled, perhaps, by the prompt despatch

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of reinforcements to the Delaware colony from New Amsterdam; and the assertion of possession was refuted so logically—on the ground that Lord Baltimore's patent gave him rights only to unseated lands, and therefore excluded him from a region colonized by the Dutch at least fifteen years before his patent was granted—that for the moment their claim was shelved. It was by no means quieted, however. Until the Dutch were squeezed out and done for, the pressure of the English upon New Netherland from the south was continued with the same persistence that characterized the pressure of the English upon that unlucky colony from the east and from the north. There was no escape from those advancing tentacles: behind which, resistless, was the power of England. It was a cuttle-fish situation that could end in only one way.

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The end would have come a trifle sooner, no doubt, had the Protector lived a little longer or had the Restoration followed directly upon his death. During the interval between September, 1658, and May, 1660, the domestic tribulations of the English gave them no time to bother about colonial extension: they had their hands full of matters requiring immediate attention at home. But when Charles II. resumed business as a king the would-be ousters of the Dutch in America instantly came to the front again.

Lord Baltimore was at the very head of the procession. "Charles had hardly reached Whitehall," as Mr. Brodhead puts it, "before Lord Baltimore instructed Captain James Neale, his agent in Holland, to require of the West India Company to yield up to him the lands

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on the south [west] side of Delaware Bay." The Earl of Stirling, while less prompt than Lord Baltimore, made up for his seemly delay by an unseemly insistence. In a petition to the King he set forth that the "Councell for the affaires of New England . . . in the eleaventh year of the raigne of your Ma^{ts} royall Father of blessed memory did graunt unto William Earle of Sterlyne, your petitioner's Grandfather, and his heires, part of New England and an Island adjacent called Long Island. . . . That yo^r Peticôners Grandfather and father, and himselfe their heire, have respectively enjoyed the same and have at their greate costs planted many places on that Island; but of late divers Dutch have intruded on severall parts thereof, not acknowledging themselves within your Ma^{ts} allegiance, to your Ma^{ts} disherison and

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your Peticôner's prejudice." Wherefore he prayed: "May your Majestie be pleased to confirme unto your Peticôner his said inheritance to be held imme- diately of the Crowne of England, and that in any future treaty betweene your royall selfe and the Dutch such provision may be as that the Dutch there may submitt themselves to your Ma^{ts} governem^t or depart those parts." Considering that the Stirling grant covered Dutch territory, his lordship's neatest turn is his reference to the intruding "divers Dutch"; but there is an air of easy assurance about his whole petition that does credit to even a Scotch earl.

To Lord Baltimore's jaunty require- ment, cited above, that the West India Company should "yield up to him" the lands on the west side of Delaware Bay, the Directors gave "a proud answer": to

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the effect that they “would use all the means which God and nature had given them to protect the inhabitants and preserve their possessions.” But they manifested less pride, and more alarm, in a memorial that they promptly addressed to the States General: praying that a protest should be presented by the Dutch ambassador in London against English aggression; and that a demand should be made for the restoration to New Netherland of the territory that the English had “usurped.” Under instructions from their High Mightinesses, the ambassador protested and demanded accordingly: and with precisely the same practical result that would have followed had he protested against the flowing of the tides, and had he demanded the cause of tidal eccentricities—the moon!

The Connecticut people, being keen to

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assert what they were pleased to call their rights, followed close at Lord Stirling's aggressive heels. Governor Winthrop, on behalf of the General Court at Hartford, drew up (June 17, 1661) for the King's consideration a "loyal address": that wandered on lightly from expressions of loyalty to a specific request for a new charter by which his Majesty would assure them in possession of their territory against the Dutch—whom they affably described as "noxious neighbours," having "not so much as the copy of a patent" to the lands which they held. That there might be no room for a doubt as to what they wanted, they asked in set terms for a charter—calmly inclusive of the unpatented lands of their "noxious neighbours"—that should cover all the country "eastward of Plymouth line, northward to the limits of the Massachu-

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setts colony, and westward to the Bay of Delaware, if it may be"; and that their modest petition might be presented properly and urged effectively they commissioned Governor Winthrop as their agent to carry it to England and to lay it before the King.

In those days passages across the Atlantic were taken where they offered. Actually, Winthrop went down to New Amsterdam—where he was given an "honourable and kind reception"—and sailed for England in the Dutch ship *De Trouw*. The Governor was not a dull man, and I think that he must have enjoyed, in the strict privacy of his inner consciousness, the subtle irony of the situation: as he courteously accepted his "honourable and kind reception" and then went sailing eastward under Dutch colors—and all the while having in his

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pocket that document which was meant to be a knife in the neck of his hosts at New Amsterdam and in the neck of the friendly power under whose flag he sailed. Had there been a Colonial Office in those days, and had Mr. Chamberlain been at the head of it, how he would have relished the story which that first colonial agent would have had to tell him when he got to land!

XVII

IN a way, the state of affairs in North America in the year 1661 was very like the state of affairs in South Africa just before "Captain Jim" made his raid. It all was on a smaller scale, of course, but the facts and the conditions were much the same. The Dutch were loosely seated in a valuable holding; their rule, arbitrary and corrupt, was resented mutinously by in-crowding greedy English settlers who nominally were Dutch subjects; a belt of English colonies—more complete than in South Africa—was tightening about them; and at the back of all the forces working for their destruction was the English government:

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moved by the normal human desire to take possession of other people's valuable property; and more deeply moved by the instinctive feeling (which had no parallel in South Africa) that only by crushing the commerce of Holland could England become the leading commercial nation of the world.

It was against Dutch commerce that the blow was struck which led on quickly—and I think fortunately—to the extinction of the Dutch ownership of New Netherland. That blow was the revision, very soon after the Restoration, of the Navigation Act of 1651. As originally framed, the act had forbidden the importation of goods into England save in English ships or in ships belonging to the country in which the goods were produced. As amended, the act forbade, after December 1, 1660, the importation

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or the exportation of goods into or from any of his Majesty's plantations or territories in Asia, Africa, or America save in English ships of which "the master and three fourths of the mariners at least are English."

This direct thrust at the commercial life of Holland was not lessened in force by the Convention agreed upon (September 14, 1662) between England and the United Provinces; rather, indeed, did the friction over that Convention tend to make matters worse. Mr. Brodhead, in his kindly way, asserts that "the Dutch fulfilled their stipulations with promptness and honor"; but, with all due deference to Mr. Brodhead, the Dutch did nothing of the sort—as the minutes of the Council for Foreign Plantations abundantly prove. On August 25, 1662, the Council ordered that "some heads of

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remedies" should be drawn up to correct the abuses incident to "a secret trade driven by and with the Dutch for Tobacco of the growth of the English Plantations, to the defrauding His Ma^{tie} of his Customs and contrary to the intent of the Act of Navigation." On June 24, 1663, the Council issued a circular letter to the governors of Virginia, Maryland, New England, and the West Indian Islands, drawing their attention to the "many neglects, or rather contempts, of his Ma^{ties} commands for y^e true observance" of the Navigation Act "through the dayly practices and designes sett on foote by trading into forrain parts . . . both by land and sea as well as unto y^e Monadoes and other Plantations of y^e Hollanders"; and in an undated document (Trade Papers 1vii, 90) giving "certaine reasons to prove if the Dutch

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bee admitted trade in Virginia it wilbe greate loss to the Kings Ma^{tie} and prejudice to the Plantacôn," the fact is stated that "there is now two shippes going from Zeland to trade there w^{ch} if they be admitted it wilbe losse to his Ma^{tie} at least 4000^{li}, w^{ch} by your Lordshipps wisdome may be prevented."

All this, with more like it, goes to show that the "promptness and honor" of the Dutch in living up to the stipulations of the Convention left a little to be desired on the side of practicality; but it also goes to show—since two traders are necessary to a trade—that the English colonies took an active part in whistling the laws of their mother country down the wind. This secondary fact is brought out with clearness in a report (March 10, 1663) upon the South, or Delaware, river colony, which contains the pregnant as-

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sertion: "Trade will come not only from the City's colony but from the English; who offer, if we will trade with them, to make a little slit in the door, whereby we can reach them overland without having recourse to the passage by sea, lest trade with them may be forbidden by the Kingdom of England, which will not allow us that in their colony."

In this same report is the statement: "The English afford us an instance of the worthiness of New Netherland, which from their Colony alone already sends 200 vessels, both large and small, to the Islands"—an involved presentment of fact that Mr. Brodhead misunderstands, and in his restatement of it perverts into meaning that the trade of New Netherland "with the West Indies and the neighbouring English colonies now [1663] employed two hundred vessels annually."

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Obviously, the two hundred vessels referred to in the report hailed from English colonial ports; and they are cited to show the "worthiness"—that is to say, the fitness—of New Netherland to take a larger share in the intercolonial trade. But the essential fact is clear that the many busy little ships then plying in American waters, Dutch and English alike, were snapping their top-sails at the Navigation Act, and that a deal of illegal trading was going on through that "little slit in the door." Mr. Brodhead—in this case with absolute correctness — summarizes the situation: "The possession of New Netherland by the Dutch was, in truth, the main obstacle to the enforcement of the restrictive colonial policy of England." And the obstacles which stood in the way of England's colonial policy in those days—there is no very

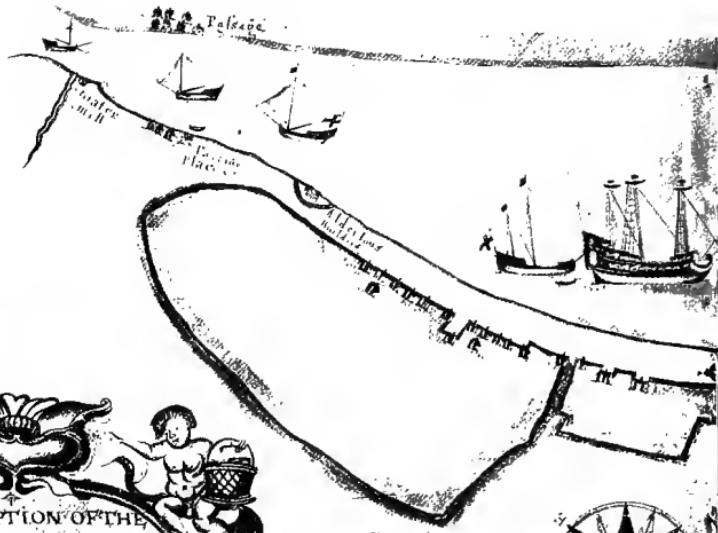
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marked change in these days—had to go down.

The final diplomatic round between England and Holland began in January 1664, when the Dutch ambassador in London was directed to insist upon a ratification by the British government of the long-pending Hartford Treaty; and so, by a definite settlement of the boundary question, clear the air. The answer to the Dutch demand certainly did settle the boundary question, and certainly did clear the air. It came two months later (March 12-22) in the shape of that epoch-making royal patent by which the King granted Long Island (released by the Earl of Stirling) and all the lands and rivers from the west side of the Connecticut to the east side of Delaware Bay to his brother, the Duke of York.

The actual conquest of New Nether-

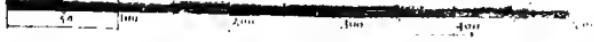
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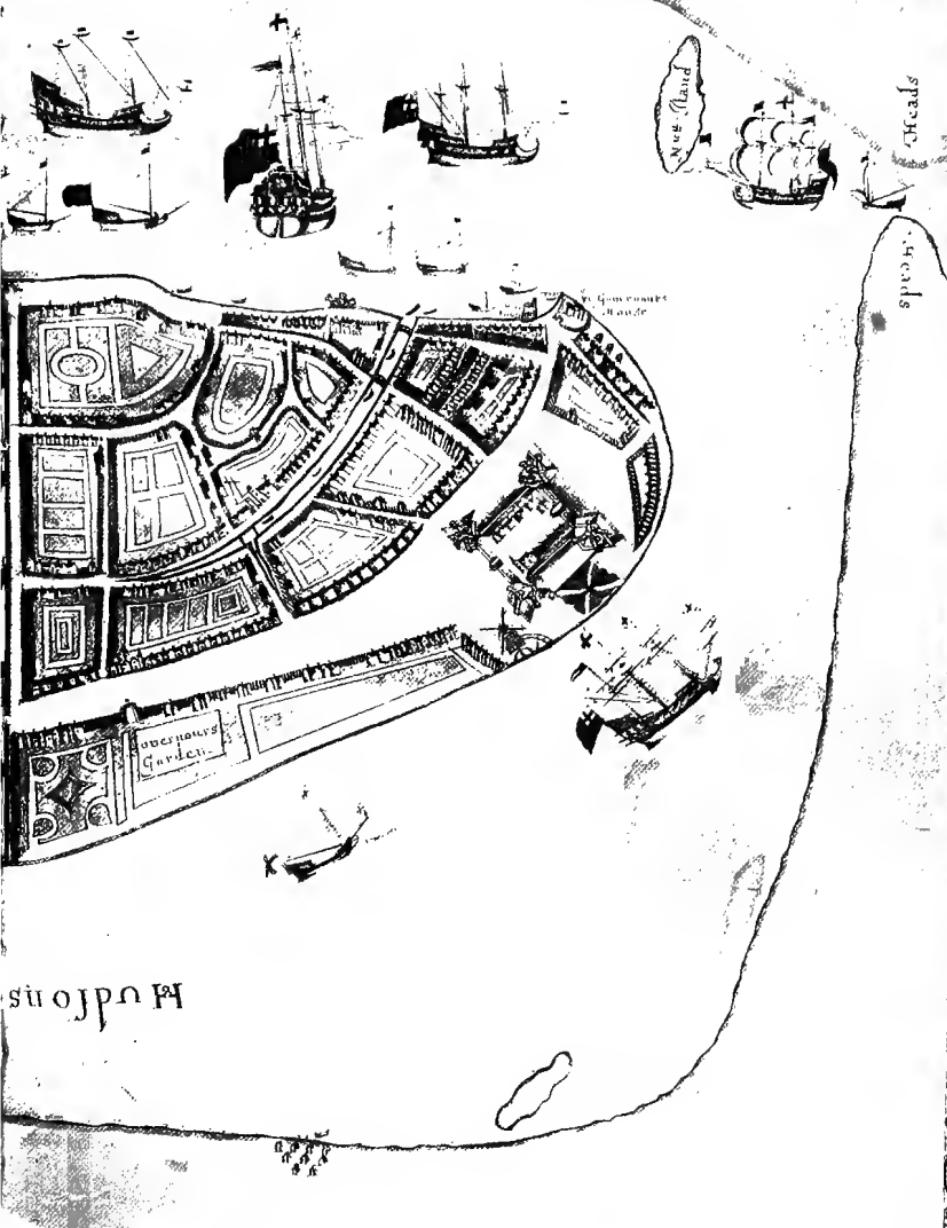
A DESCRIPTION OF THE
TOWNE OF MANNADOS
OR NEW AMSTERDAM.

1660. It was in 1660 first built
lying in Latitudo 40° and 40'
Longitudo 74° and 74' 1000 ft.

This Scale of Five hundred yarde is for the Towne.



ELAND.



LAN," 1661-1664

Showing

New York)

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land by the force sent out by the Duke of York to take possession of his newly acquired property, as I have written elsewhere, was "a mere bit of bellicose etiquette: a polite changing of garrisons, of fealty, and of flags"; and by way of comment upon that easy shifting of allegiance I farther have written in these general terms: "Under the government of the Dutch West India Company, the New Netherland had been managed not as a national dependency, but as a commercial venture which was expected to bring in a handsome return. Much more than the revenue necessary to maintain a government was required of the colonists; and at the same time the restrictions imposed upon private trade—to the end that the trade of the Company might be increased—were so onerous as materially to diminish the earning power of the

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individual, and correspondingly to make the burden of taxation the heavier to bear. Nor could there be between the colonists and the Company—as there could have been between the colonists and even a severe home government—a tie of loyalty. Indeed, the situation had become so strained under this commercial despotism that the inhabitants of New Amsterdam almost openly sided with the English when the formal demand for a surrender was made—and the town passed into British possession, and became New York, without the striking of a single blow.”

XVIII

ON the side of ethics, the taking over of New Netherland by the English admits of differing opinions. Mr. Brodhead flat-footedly calls it "bold robbery." Dr. Asher, himself a Dutchman, regards it as the occupation by the English of territory that was theirs by right of discovery, of settlement, and of specific grant. For my own part—lacking the temerity to pass judgment upon so vexed a question—I am content to ignore the ethical side of that easy conquest and to ground my approval of it on the fact that, as things then stood in Europe and in America, it was the only practicable treatment of an impossible problem; to

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which, with submission, I add my conviction that for all the parties in interest it was the best substitute for a solution possible under the conditions which obtained.

The gain to England was so obvious that it need not be discussed. The gain to Holland was getting rid of a nettle of a colony which—by involving her in an outlay of more than a million guilders above returns, and by most dangerously complicating her relations with her most powerful rival—from first to last did little but sting her hands. The gain to the English colonies in America was an immediate enlargement of intercolonial trade: with a resultant solidarity of interests which strongly helped—a little more than a century later—to bring about their formal union and their definite independence. The gain to New Nether-

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land—the essential matter here to be considered—was escape from a harsh and incompetent government, that crushed trade and that did much to make life unendurable, to the fostering care of a government that developed trade in every direction and that in its treatment of individuals erred on the side of laxness.

Out of that laxness came ill results. That the morals of New Amsterdam did not improve under English rule is not surprising—because New Amsterdam had no morals. On the other hand, its immorals—of which its supply was excessive—developed vigorously, in sympathy with its vigorously developing commercial life. In the last decade of the seventeenth century—what with our pirates and our slavers and the general disposition on the part of our leading citizens to

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ride a hurdle race over all known laws, including the Ten Commandments—New York certainly was as vicious a little seafaring city as was to be found just then in all Christendom. But the fact is to be borne in mind that the evil state of affairs which developed under English government was put an end to by an English governor. And the farther fact is to be borne in mind that onward from the time of that first reform governor there has been in this town—as there conspicuously was not in this town during the Dutch period of its history—at least an avowed outward respect for decency and for law. I do not assert, of course, that this admirable sentiment has shone brilliantly or steadfastly, or that it is not badly snowed under at times even now; but I do assert that until we came under English rule such sentiment practically did

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not exist at all. Lord Bellomont was the first of our governors—and this is not to cast a slight upon the excellent reorganizing work of Colonel Nicolls—who forced us to put some of our worst sins behind us, and so set us in the way (along which we still are floundering) to achieve that civic rectitude which was an unknown virtue in the Dutch times.

Having thus, for truth's sake, set forth the development and the curbing of our immorals which followed our taking on of a new nationality, I am free to make my final point—the enormous gain in material prosperity—in favor of that shifting of ownership which changed New Amsterdam into New York. When the English took over the city (September 8, 1664) the number of houses in it—as shown by Cortelyou's survey of the year

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1660—was about 350, and the population was about 1500 souls. An authoritative record has been preserved—in the petition of the New York millers and merchants against the repeal of the Bolting Act—of exactly what this city gained in its first thirty years of English rule. The petition states that in the year 1678, when the Bolting Act became operative, the total number of houses in New York was 384; the total number of beef-cattle slaughtered was 400; the total number of sailing craft (3 ships, 7 boats, 8 sloops) was 18; and the total revenues of the city were less than £2000. The petition farther states that in the year 1694 (there is a secondary interest here, in that we see what the added two centuries have done for us) the number of houses had increased to 983; the number of beef-cattle slaughtered

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(largely for profitable export to the West Indies) to 4000; the number of sailing craft (60 ships, 40 boats, 25 sloops) to 125; and the city's revenues to £5000.

That statement of fact I conceive to be the most striking commentary that can be made upon the relative material merits of Dutch and of English rule. The sudden prodigious increase of the population and of the commerce of this city equally were due to a general easement of political and of commercial conditions: the first impossible while the Dutch domination continued; and the second rigorously withheld (of set purpose or of set stupidity) during the four decades that the West India Company betrayed all the interests of New Netherland in order to gain—yet failed to gain—its own selfish ends. I hope that we may

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be able to make as good a showing in the Philippines at the end of our first thirty years.

But argument for or against that bold robbery, or that resumption of vested rights—as our two most authoritative historians, with a somewhat confusing divergence of opinion, respectively describe the English acquisition of New Netherland—no longer is necessary. As I have written, that once burning question became a dead issue in a time long past. Whatever were the equities of the conflicting Dutch and English claims to the most valuable slice of the continent of North America, they were quieted legally by the Treaty of Breda. And they have been quieted ethically—in the flowing of the years since that remote diplomatic agreement was executed—by

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the passage of the property in dispute away from both claimant races into the possession of their descendants: who have coalesced into a new race, and who take their title from themselves.

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